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*THE SECOND
GREAT WAR*



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THE SECOND GREAT WAR

A Standard History

Edited by

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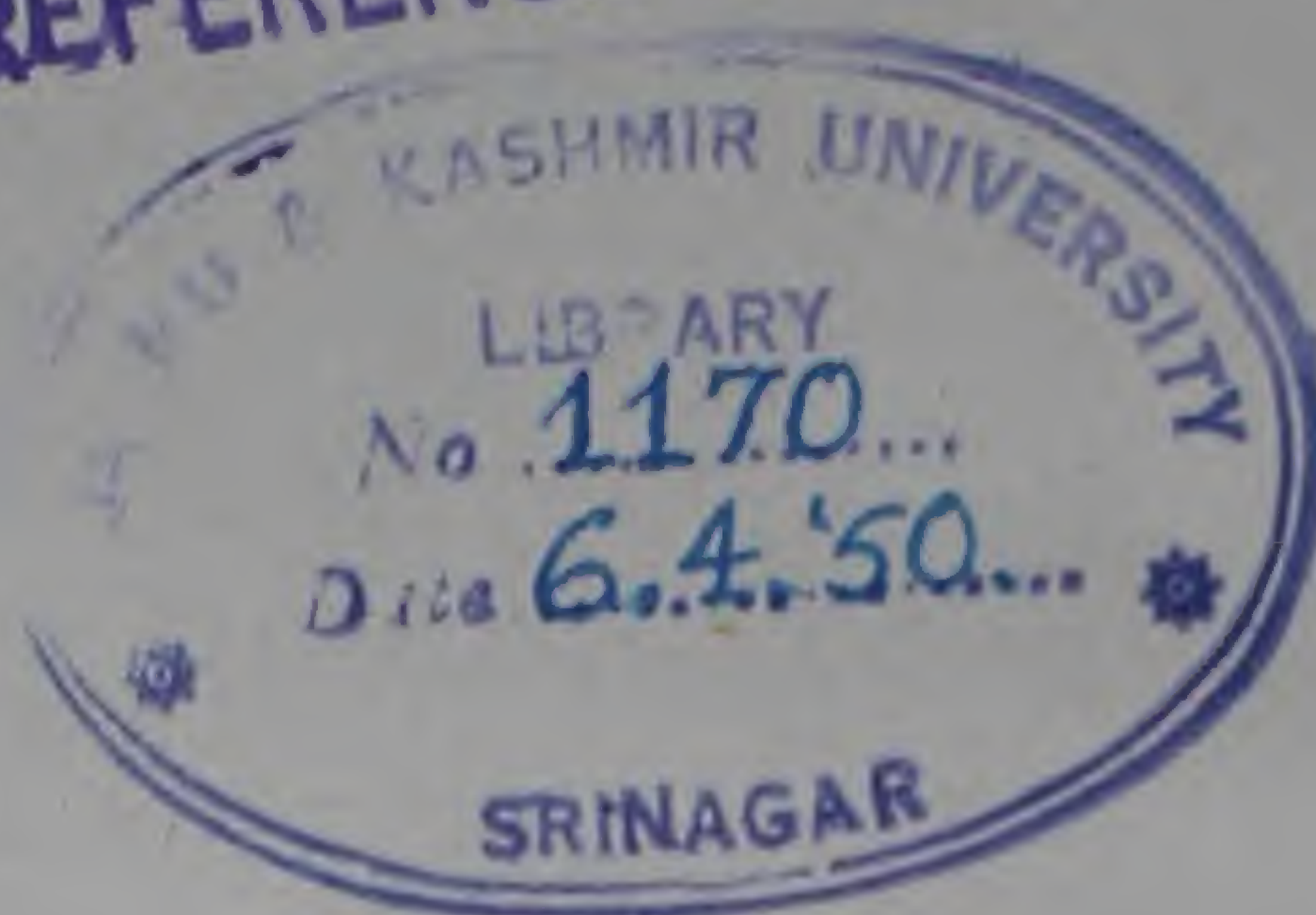
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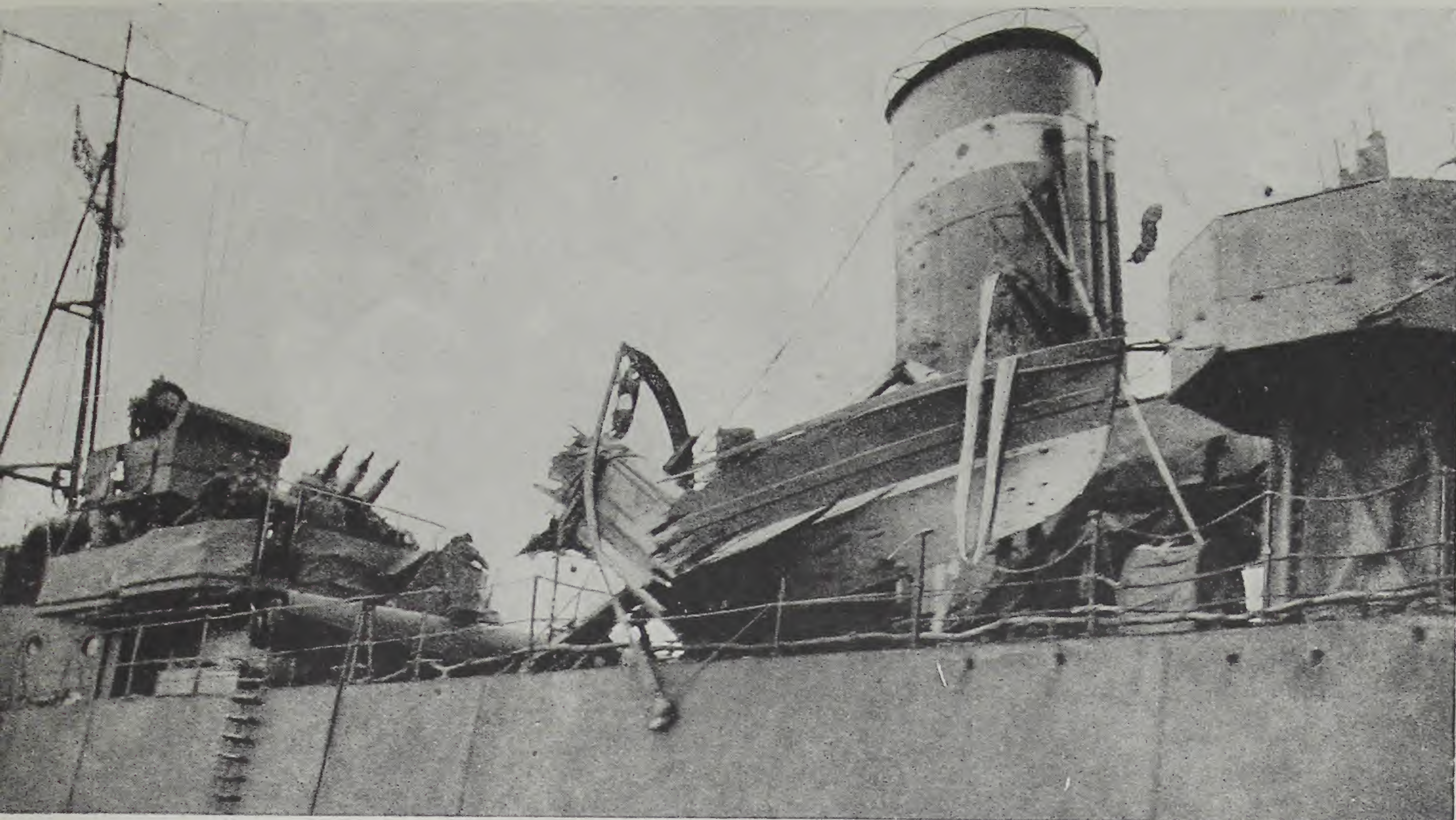
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AFTER THE FIGHT AT NARVIK WAS OVER

British losses in the second battle of Narvik were relatively light, and although the German crews handled their weapons well, no British ship was sunk. In the initial destroyer action itself great skill in manoeuvre was shown by both sides, but superior weight of metal swung the tide of battle in favour of the attackers. Of the British vessels engaged, the 'Punjabi' played as vigorous a part as any: below are some of her victorious crew and, above, part of the destroyer, showing damage typical of the superficial injuries sustained.

Photos, Fox





H.M.S. 'BITTERN' LOST OFF NAMSOS

This amazing photograph was taken on board H.M.S. 'Bittern' immediately after she had been set on fire by bombs from a German aircraft in Namsos Fjord at the beginning of May, 1940. She became derelict and was later torpedoed by one of our submarines to prevent her becoming a danger to other vessels. H.M.S. 'Bittern,' an escort vessel of 1,190 tons, was completed in March, 1938.

Photo, Central Press

THE SEA AFFAIR: THE INVASION OF NORWAY

British Minefields Off Norway—German Fleet Comes Out—Heroic End of 'Glowworm'—Encounter Between 'Renown' and 'Scharnhorst'—The Two Battles of Narvik—Successes of Our Submarines—British Naval Strength Increases—Loss of 'Bittern' and 'Afridi'—H.M.S. 'Effingham' is Wrecked—The Royal Navy's Tasks During the Invasion of the Low Countries—Dutch Warships which Joined Britain's Forces

(A detailed description of events at Narvik is given in Chapter 80)

THE comparative uneventfulness of the war at sea which characterized the month of March, 1940, continued throughout the first week of April, and although it was known that the harbours and bases of Germany were the scene of intense activity, there was little to show what offensive object this portended. It was clear at least that some kind of military expedition was afoot, for it was learned that large numbers of German merchant vessels were being fitted as transports and that a considerable number of ships of all kinds were being assembled at the mouth of the Elbe and in Baltic ports.

On April 8 it was announced that the British Navy had laid minefields along considerable stretches of Norwegian territorial waters: at West Fjord, at the head of which lies the port of Narvik, in an area about forty miles long and four miles wide; at Bodø, on the Norwegian coast south of Trondheim; and at Stadtland, between Trondheim and Bergen. The second and third minefields extended eight to ten miles out to sea.

In a speech in the House of Commons on April 11, Mr. Winston Churchill made

The Norwegian Corridor

clear the intolerable disadvantage which the Allies had suffered during seven months of war

by the free use of Norwegian territorial waters permitted to all manner of German shipping. He explained how the peculiar configuration of the Norwegian coast provided a kind of corridor or "covered way" through which German ships could move without molestation. The proposal was made to the Norwegians that a minefield should be laid, a proposal which had been agreed to in the last war but which was now emphatically rejected. This rejection placed the British Government in the invidious position of having either to tolerate a status quo which was becoming unbearable, or reluctantly to disregard the principles of international law for which they were fighting.

Meanwhile, as it turned out, during the last week in March the Germans were using the Norwegian corridor to send empty ore ships forward with

military stores and concealed troops ready to make their swoop when the appointed moment came on the Norwegian ports which they desired to make their own. When the British minefields were laid in the early morning of April 8, the invasion of Norway had in fact begun, according to plans laid down and in process of fulfilment for at least a month before. Later evidence showed that several years earlier Germany had carried out purposeful surveys of Scandinavian waters.

While the British ships entrusted with the minelaying were disposing themselves at their stations, news of the greatest moment had reached the British commander-in-chief (Sir Charles Forbes) at Scapa Flow. British Naval air reconnaissances had detected a German battle-cruiser accompanied by a number of cruisers, destroyers and other vessels—in fact, as the First Lord said, "quite a fleet"—moving very swiftly northwards. The Commander-in-Chief immediately put to sea to try and find the enemy and bring them to action.

Meanwhile, when the minelayers had completed their task they withdrew to

the westward. H.M.S. "Glowworm," one of the destroyers which accompanied this force, had lost a man overboard on the Sunday afternoon, had stopped behind to rescue him, and was hurrying to rejoin her force on Monday morning, April 8, when she saw two German destroyers which she hastened to engage. She reported also the presence of another German ship to the northward. Then her messages stopped.

Stated to be an eye-witness account of the last moments of "Glowworm," the following story from the special correspondent of "The Times" at Rotterdam appeared on April 15. The narrative is by a member of a German "propaganda company."

He said that the naval squadron to which he was attached was steaming at full speed from the Heligoland Bight northwards, escorted by destroyers, when the news came that one of the rearmost destroyers had engaged a British destroyer. The rear cruiser was ordered to join in the attack and at once turned about. The British destroyer, which was soon sighted on the horizon, revealed her identity by signalling a question in English by a flash-lamp. The cruiser answered with fire from all her guns. The destroyer dodged, let out a smoke-screen, and succeeded in manoeuvring within

SUNK BY NORWEGIAN FIRE

Among enemy ships destroyed during the invasion of Norway was the cruiser 'Karlsruhe,' below, hit by the Norwegian coastal batteries and sunk off Kristiansand, a harbour on the Skagerrak

Photo, Central Press



torpedo range. She then fired a salvo of torpedoes, which the cruiser only just avoided by putting her helm hard over. The British destroyer had no chance of delivering a second discharge. She was overwhelmed with shells, and a violent explosion broke her in halves. All the survivors, it is said, were picked up by the cruiser.

At this time hopes were held at the Admiralty that this strong enemy force might be caught between the British force lately engaged in minelaying and the main Home Fleet. Unhappily, the enemy made good their escape. The chances of such an encounter are infinitely more remote at sea than they are on land, when the results of a converging

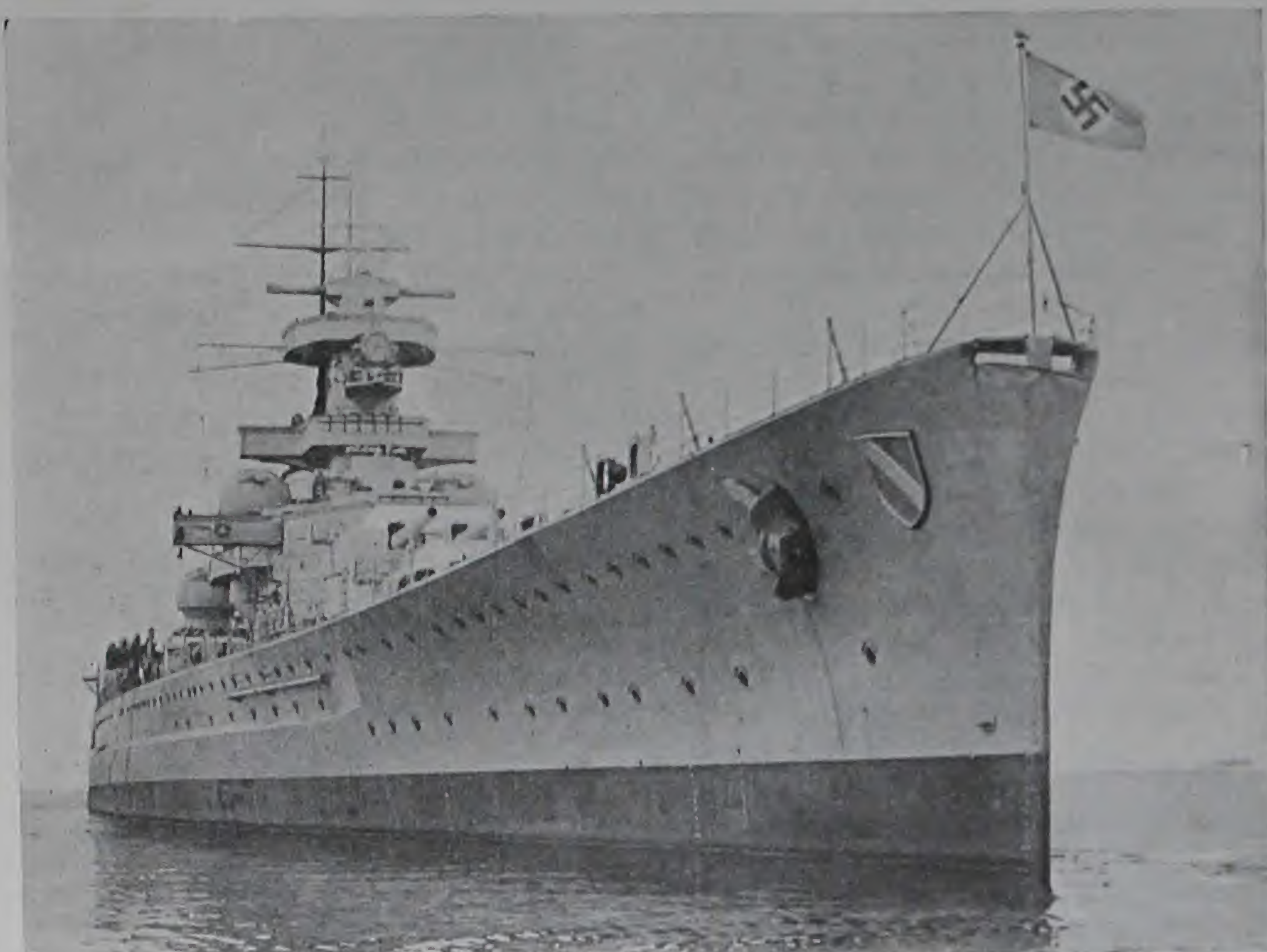
It was snowing hard and a gale was raging, but the "Renown" opened fire at 18,000 yards. After replying some three minutes later, the enemy turned away. It was observed that the battle-cruiser had been hit on her forward superstructure, and a column of smoke was seen over her; her guns became silent, though later they resumed firing under local control. The heavy cruiser accompanying her then threw out a smoke screen, and both escaped.

That same afternoon of April 9 the British Second Destroyer Flotilla, commanded by Captain B. A. Warburton-Lee, was in the vicinity of West

German Losses at Sea (April 8-16)

Warships		
Name	Tons	
Admiral Scheer	10,000	Torpedoed and damaged
Bluecher ... (or Gneisenau)	10,000	Sunk (German report said Bluecher)
Karlsruhe	6,000	Torpedoed and sunk
Gneisenau	26,000	Sunk (Norwegian official)
Scharnhorst	26,000	Damaged by Renown
Emden	5,400	Sunk off Oslo
8 to 11 Destroyers	—	Sunk (varying reports)
1 Light Cruiser	—	Sunk off Bergen (some reports state 2)
1 U-boat	—	Sunk
Tankers, Transports, Merchant and Supply Ships		
*Posidonia	5,000 (?)	Sunk, April 9
*August Leonhardt	2,593	"
*Kreta	2,539	" April 8
*Rio de Janeiro	5,261	" April 8
*Amasis	7,129	" April 9
*Ionia	3,102	" April 14
Antares	2,593	"
*Moorsund	321	" April 12 [sunk]
7 other ships	—	4 torpedoed, 3 reported
6 supply ships	—	Sunk
Rauenfels	—	"
Tanker Skagerrak	6,044	Scuttled
Main	7,624	"
Tanker Kattegat	—	Sunk
Alster	8,514	Captured

* Sunk by British submarines



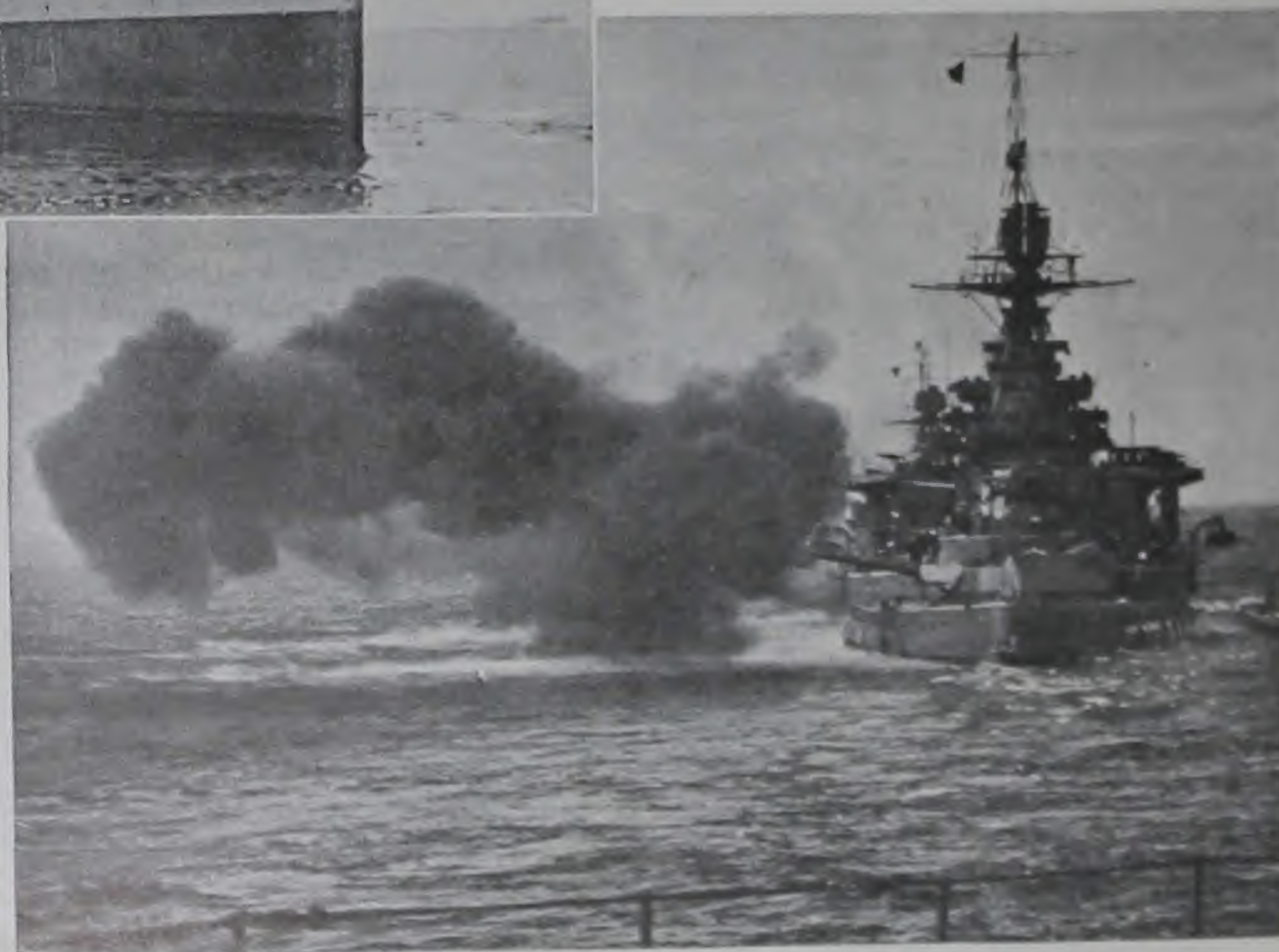
movement can with some certainty be predicted.

On the next day (Tuesday, April 9) the British Fleet was steaming off the Norwegian coast about Bergen when it was very heavily attacked by German aircraft. Two cruisers were slightly damaged, but remained at their stations. One very heavy bomb hit the flagship "Rodney," but her armour withstood the impact, although she suffered some casualties, four officers and three men being injured. The cruiser "Aurora" was subjected to five bombing attacks, all of which failed, but the destroyer "Gurkha" which accompanied her was hit, and sank after 4½ hours. The "Gurkha's" crew was saved.

Weather conditions farther north, off Narvik, were of the worst description when at dawn on the Tuesday the battle-cruiser "Renown" sighted the "Scharnhorst" and a 10,000-ton Hipper-class cruiser in the far distance.

Fjord, leading into Ofot Fjord, at whose head is the town of Narvik. Learning of the presence of a strong enemy destroyer force in the Ofot Fjord, the British commander sought instructions from London, and was in effect given a free hand on his own responsibility. He replied "Going into action," and by 4.30 a.m. on April 10 the Second Destroyer Flotilla was off Narvik.

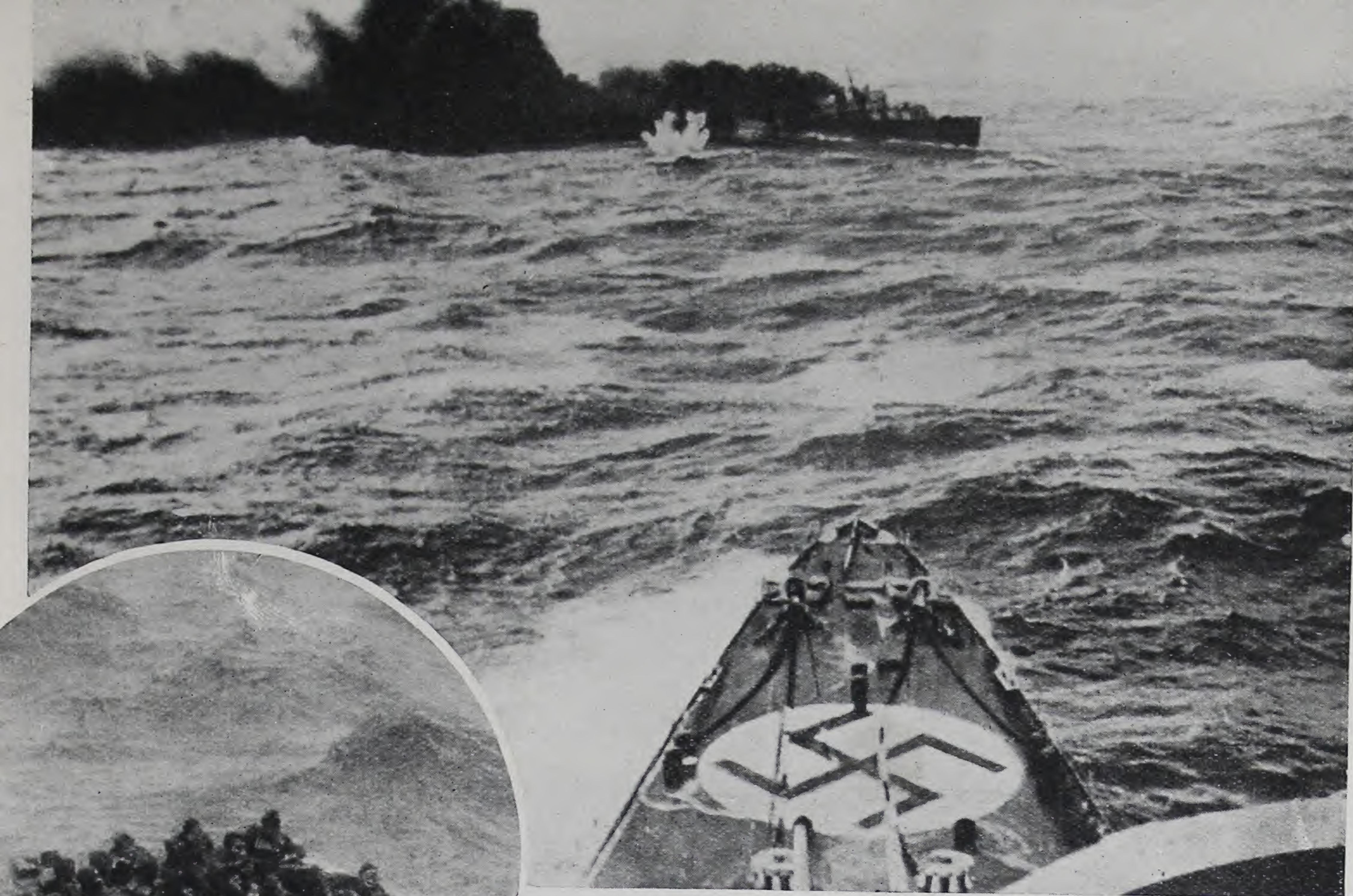
The story of the resulting battle is told in Chapter 80. One enemy destroyer out of nine was sunk and three more were left on fire; all were heavier in



OPPONENTS IN A RUNNING FIGHT

Some damage was sustained by the British battle-cruiser "Renown" when she was engaged in a running fight with the "Scharnhorst" and a 10,000-ton cruiser on April 9, 1940. The "Scharnhorst" herself was damaged, and was again attacked later. Above is "Renown," and top left, the "Scharnhorst."

Photos, Associated Press; Charles E. Brown



AFTERMATH OF A NAVAL ACTION

During the crossing to Norway German naval units fell in with H.M. Destroyer 'Glowworm,' and after a sharp engagement with a German warship the 'Glowworm' was sunk. These photographs show : above, a shell bursting in front of the British destroyer, as seen from the enemy craft ; left, some of the 'Glowworm's' crew in a rubber lifeboat ; below, half drowned British sailors clamber aboard the enemy warship.

Photos, Planet News ; Lubinski

X²



armament than the British—having more guns, and of bigger calibre. The flotilla leader "Hardy" was so damaged that she was run ashore; Capt. Warburton-Lee was fatally wounded. An older destroyer, H.M.S. "Hunter," was sunk; "Hotspur" and "Hostile" were damaged, but carried on. During the withdrawal the British flotilla sank the ammunition ship "Rauenfels" and destroyed six transports.

The second battle of Narvik opened on April 13. The Second Flotilla had remained to blockade the enemy in Narvik Fjord. It was reinforced by H.M.S. "Warspite" and a strong force of destroyers, and about noon on the 13th the combined fleet, under Vice-Admiral Whitworth, advanced up the fjord to attack the enemy. Four German destroyers were sunk in Narvik Bay; three others, which fled up Rombaks Fjord, a narrow inlet behind the town of Narvik, were pursued and destroyed. On the British side three destroyers were damaged.

In a fight off Horten on the west coast of Oslo Fjord, on April 10, the Norwegian minelayer "Olav Tryggvason" sank the German cruiser "Emden." The Germans further admitted the loss of the cruiser "Bluecher" by gunfire from shore batteries and Norwegian mines in Oslo Fjord, and also of the "Karlsruhe," which they said had been sunk by Norwegian gunfire off Kristiansand. It was afterwards established, however, that this cruiser had received three torpedoes from H.M. Submarine "Truant." The loss of the "Bluecher" was a severe one, for aboard this ship were the German admiral commanding the sea forces and a German general commanding the army of occupation, together with their staffs. It was believed that out of 1,500 on the vessel there were only 40 survivors.

The pocket battleship "Admiral Scheer" was attacked on April 11 by H.M. Submarine "Spearfish" and was hit by one if not more torpedoes.

British submarines had a great record of success during this fateful April. Thus on April 10 "Triton" put four torpedoes into a large convoy, and "Sunfish" torpedoed and sank a 3,000-ton German supply ship. On April 11 "Triad," penetrating Oslo Fjord, torpedoed and sank a 4,000-ton supply ship; while "Sealion" sank the "August Leonhardt," of 2,593 tons. "Sunfish" accounted for two other supply ships, and "Snapper" also successfully attacked enemy convoys, five of her torpedoes striking home. On April 18 the submarine "Seawolf" attacked a convoy, setting one ship on fire and hitting another with a torpedo.

Allied naval units operating in the North Sea, though scoring substantial successes, did not go unscathed. Among vessels lost by the

French was the destroyer "Bison" (2,436 tons), bombed while on

Loss of
'Bison'

escort duty with a troop convoy. The Polish navy cooperating with the British fleet since the beginning of the war lost the destroyer "Grom," engaged in operations off the coast of Norway. The "Grom" was one of three Polish destroyers which had got away from the Baltic just before the outbreak of war.

In the House of Commons, on April 11, Mr. Churchill gave an outline of the Navy's doings in Scandinavian waters, and said that the German navy had suffered mutilation in extremely important elements. The Allies were stronger at sea than the enemy, and could control the Mediterranean at the

HEROES OF THE 'SPEARFISH'

On April 11, 1940, the German pocket battleship 'Admiral Scheer' (below) was torpedoed by the British submarine 'Spearfish' and badly damaged. For this feat Lieut.-Commander J. H. Forbes (left) gained the D.S.O.; on August 28, 1940, the Admiralty announced that the 'Spearfish' must be presumed lost.

Photos, "Daily Mirror"; Fax





NAZI BOMB FALLS WIDE OF THE MARK

During an air attack on the British naval units off Bergen on April 9, 1940, a bomb exploded in the sea near H.M.S. 'Rodney,' as seen above. Another bomb fell on the vessel and caused some casualties

Photo, Central Press

same time that we carried on operations in the North Sea. One of the interesting facts revealed by Mr. Churchill was that for a period of five weeks the Home Fleet had again been using the anchorage at Scapa Flow.

The invasion of Norway on April 8 had been preceded by a continued and ruthless attack on her shipping while she could still claim the rights of a neutral power. On April 5 it was announced that, after torpedoing without warning the Norwegian steamer "Navana" (2,118

tons) 30 miles off the north coast of Scotland, a U-boat had cruised about for half an hour without making any attempt to save drowning men.

Next day brought news of British successes against German ships in Scandinavian waters. Three vessels, including one carrying 300-500 troops, had been torpedoed by British submarines in the Skagerrak off Southern Norway. These ships were the "Rio de Janeiro" (5,261 tons), the tanker "Posidonia" (5,000 tons), and the "Kreta" (2,539 tons). Later news

told of other German transports and auxiliaries sunk in Scandinavian waters—the "Main" (7,624 tons); the "Antares" (2,593 tons), mined or torpedoed; the "Ionia" (3,102 tons); the "August Leonhardt" (2,593 tons); and the tanker "Moorsund" (321 tons), all sunk by British submarines.

The escape of one convoy was due to the enterprise and resource of Captain Pinkney, of the "Fylingdale," in charge of six British and thirty-one neutral ships in a fjord near Bergen on April 9. Almost ready to sail, they saw the German tanker "Skagerrak" enter the fjord, her decks lined with troops. When she hurriedly made off, Captain Pinkney had his first inkling of what was afoot, and just afterwards received a radio message telling all British ships to leave. He got the convoy going and in due course they met an escort of British warships and made their way safely home.

At the beginning of May, owing to the attitude of Italy, British shipping was being diverted from the Mediterranean. Mediterranean On the same day the Precautions Admiralty made known the loss of the submarines "Tarpon" (Lt.-Comdr. H. J. Caldwell) and "Sterlet" (Lt.-Comdr. G. H. S. Havard). The "Sterlet" was the most modern of the eight submarines of the "Shark" class, while "Tarpon" was a sister ship of the "Trident," "Triton" and "Truant."

Next day came the news of the loss of the sloop "Bittern" (Lt.-Comdr. R. Miles). She had been repeatedly attacked by enemy aircraft, and after prolonged fighting (in which one aircraft



SMART WORK BY THE 'SNAPPER'

During the Nazi invasion of Norway the British submarine 'Snapper' distinguished herself by sinking four or five German ships off the Norwegian coast. Above are some of the German prisoners landed from the 'Snapper.' Inset, Lieut. W. D. King, of 'Snapper,' photographed after receiving the D.S.O. from the hands of King George.

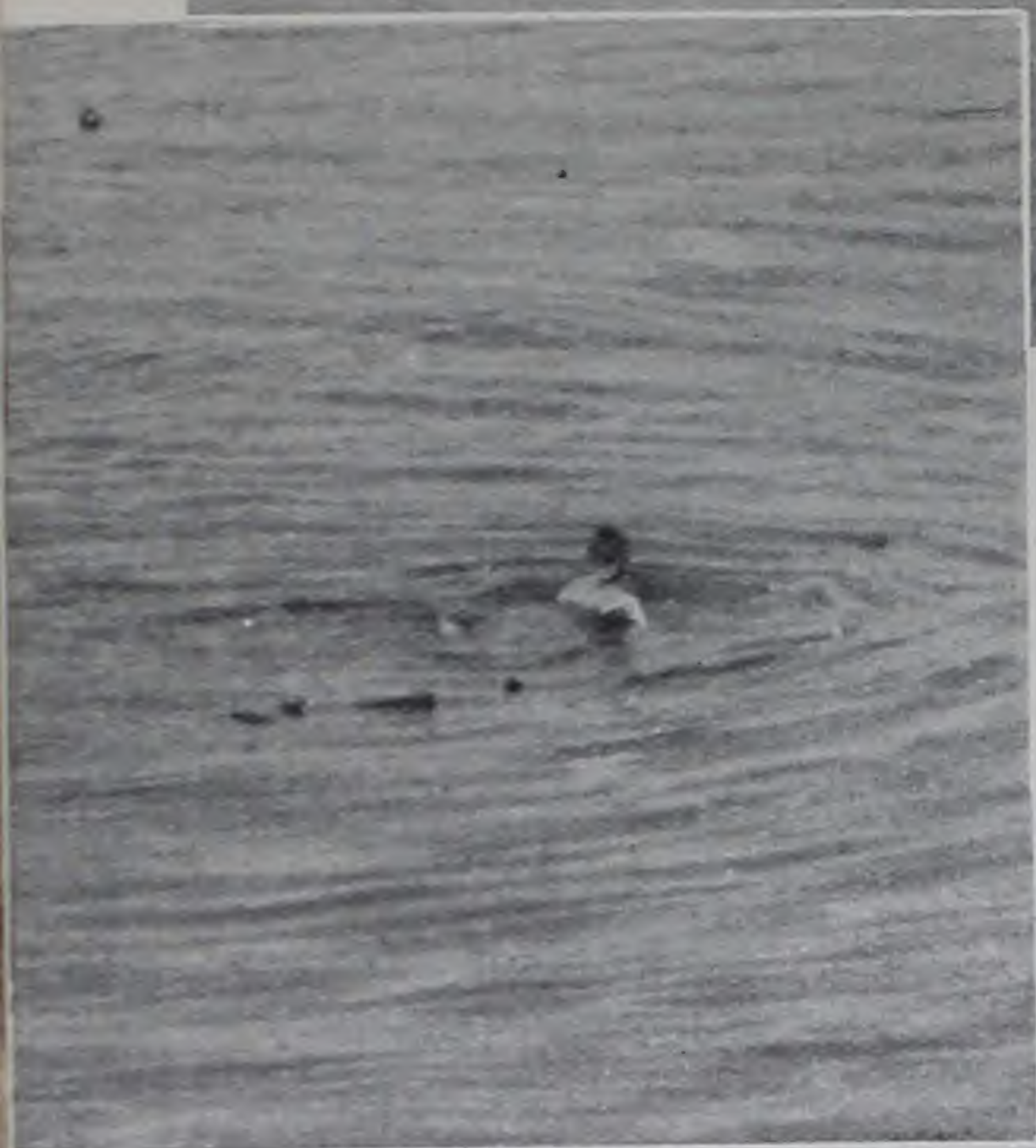
Photos, Central Press; Keystone



FATE OF A POLISH DESTROYER

When Poland was overwhelmed by the Nazis, certain naval units escaped and joined forces with the Royal Navy. Among these were the destroyers 'Grom' (Thunder) and 'Blyskawica' (Lightning), illustrated in page 389. In the summer of 1940 the 'Grom,' while operating off Narvik, was heavily bombed by German aircraft and sank within two or three minutes. She is seen below in the fjord shortly before the attack. Not content with sinking the destroyer the German airmen deliberately machine-gunned the survivors in the water; one of these hapless targets is seen among wreckage on the left. Fortunately a British destroyer was at hand (top) and her boats were able to pick up all but 66 of the crew.

Photos, G.P.U.



was shot down in flames and others severely handled) was set on fire in Namsos Fjord. This sloop, designed principally for the protection of convoys against air attacks, fought a most gallant battle against great odds. With her ammunition exploding, and stricken by enemy bombs, she continued to fight on until at great hazard her crew were rescued. Next afternoon she was torpedoed and sunk by a British warship to prevent her becoming a danger to navigation.

Other losses off the coast of Norway announced at this time included that of H.M. Destroyer "Afridi" (Capt. P. L. Vian, D.S.O.), bombed

'Afridi'
Sunk

and sunk while protecting the convoy containing troops withdrawn

from Namsos. "With the arrival of daylight," stated the Admiralty communiqué, "repeated waves of enemy aircraft kept up an incessant attack upon the convoy, but the barrage maintained by the anti-aircraft guns of the escort was so effective that the troop transports were untouched."

Six naval trawlers were also lost off the coast of Norway: the "Warwickshire," the "Cape Chelyuskin," the "Jardine," the "St. Goran," the "Gaul" and "Aston Villa." These craft were



NAVAL LOSSES IN NORWAY

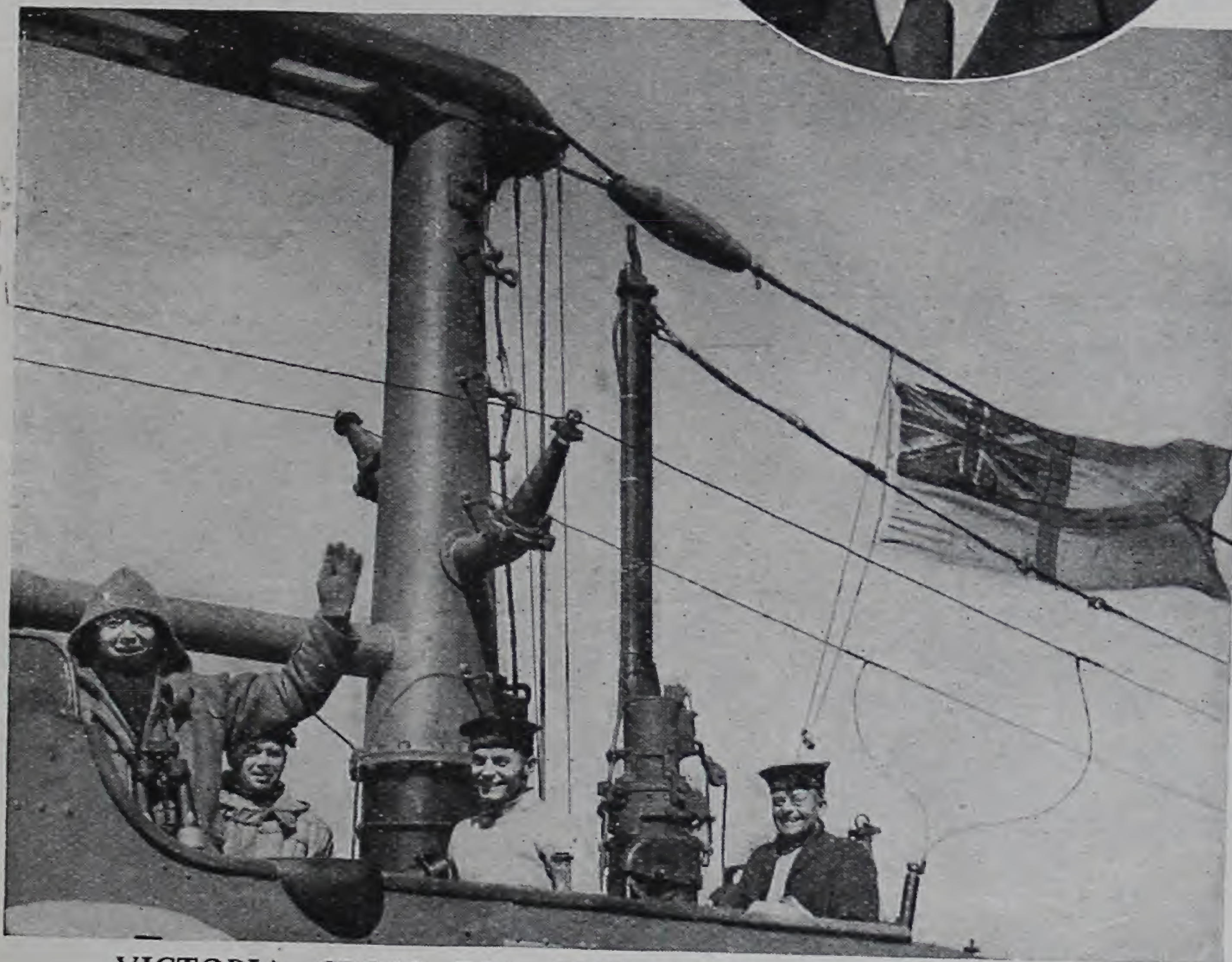
One of the most serious British naval casualties of the Norwegian campaign was when H.M.S. 'Effingham' (above) became a total loss through striking an uncharted rock off the coast of Norway.

Photo, Wright; Logan

damaged by air attack, and it was not deemed advisable for them to cross the North Sea. They were therefore sunk, presumably because there was no time for effective repairs. The casualties were slight. Further naval losses announced during May included H.M.S. "Seal," a minelayer submarine of 1,520 tons surface displacement, and the destroyer "Valentine" (1,100 tons), damaged by air attack off the Dutch coast and subsequently beached with, it was believed, few casualties. Commanded by Commander H. J. Buchanan, Royal Australian Navy, H.M.S. "Valentine" was completed in 1918 and had been converted into an escort vessel. H.M.S. "Whitley" (Lt.-Comdr. J. N. Rolfe) was also damaged by bombs and subsequently sunk. She, too, was an "over-age" destroyer which had been converted into an escort vessel.

Other warships lost during May were H.M.S. "Wessex," a destroyer of 1,100 tons, sunk after enemy air attack off the French coast; the minesweeping trawler "Charles Boyer" and the minelayer "Princess Victoria," both sunk by enemy mines; and the naval trawlers "Melbourne" and "Cape Passaro." The most serious casualty of the period was the 10,000-ton cruiser "Effingham" (Capt. J. M. Houston), which became a total loss through striking an uncharted rock off the Norwegian coast.

To set off against these losses there was a magnificent record of successes by Allied submarines, troopships and supply ships off Norway. Between



VICTORIA CROSS FOR THE ROYAL NAVAL RESERVE

The first British naval detachment landed at Namsos on April 14, and British troops were finally withdrawn on May 1, 1940. During that time such "outstanding valour and devotion to duty" were shown by Lieut. R. B. Stannard, R.N.R. (circle), of H.M. Trawler 'Arab,' that he was subsequently awarded the V.C. His most notable feat was the establishment of an armed camp on shore close to his ship. Although in five days the 'Arab' sustained 31 bombing attacks, and the camp and Lewis-gun positions were repeatedly machine-gunned and bombed, only one man was wounded. Magnificent work was also done in Norwegian waters by British submarines. Above is 'Sunfish,' which sank four German ships during April alone: her captain, Lieut.-Commander J. Slaughter, waves a greeting on the vessel's safe return home.

Photos, G.P.U.; Topical

May 1 and May 15 at least nine German transport and supply ships were sunk, in addition to a 5,000-ton supply ship chased ashore and shelled by H.M.S. "Trident" on May 2. The work of the submarines was done under exceptionally difficult circumstances, to which calm weather conditions, a bright moon, and the constant activity of enemy air patrols and surface vessels all contributed. And against our naval losses also should be counted the comparative immunity of British merchant shipping during this period. The total sinkings for April were in fact 18,249 tons, while world tonnage losses amounted to 41,677 tons, the smallest monthly figure since the war began. Up to May 1, 19,098 merchant ships had been convoyed by the British Navy, of which 31 (or one in 616) were lost by enemy action. The French figures were 3,457 ships convoyed with seven losses.

The invasion of Holland and Belgium on May 10 brought immediate tasks to the Royal Navy—such as assisting the evacuation of the Dutch Royal Family, a dash by motor torpedo boats into the Zuyder Zee, laying of mines, destruction

of oil dumps, and the blocking of the port of Ymuiden, to the west of Amsterdam. Magnetic mines had been laid by the enemy at the entrances to most of the Dutch ports, but the British minesweepers were able to deal with them and to enable a great deal of shipping to escape. Enemy air attacks on the minesweepers brought little success. Prompt and successful work was also done by British minelayers, who within two hours of the enemy onslaught were laying mines in vital places along the seaboard of the Low Countries.

A flotilla of motor torpedo boats was dispatched from the East Coast to hamper any German attempt to cross the Zuyder Zee—which is very shallow—but within twelve hours of the arrival of this flotilla it became obvious that



CONVOY CAPTAIN

Capt. John Short Pinkney, of the S.S. "Fylingdale," who showed great daring and enterprise in extricating a convoy from a Bergen fjord. He was awarded the O.B.E.

Photo, Topical

Amsterdam must fall, and the flotilla was obliged to withdraw past blazing oil tanks along a canal almost blocked by small craft. The motor torpedo boats were heavily attacked by German aircraft, but replied effectively, bringing down at least one German aeroplane.

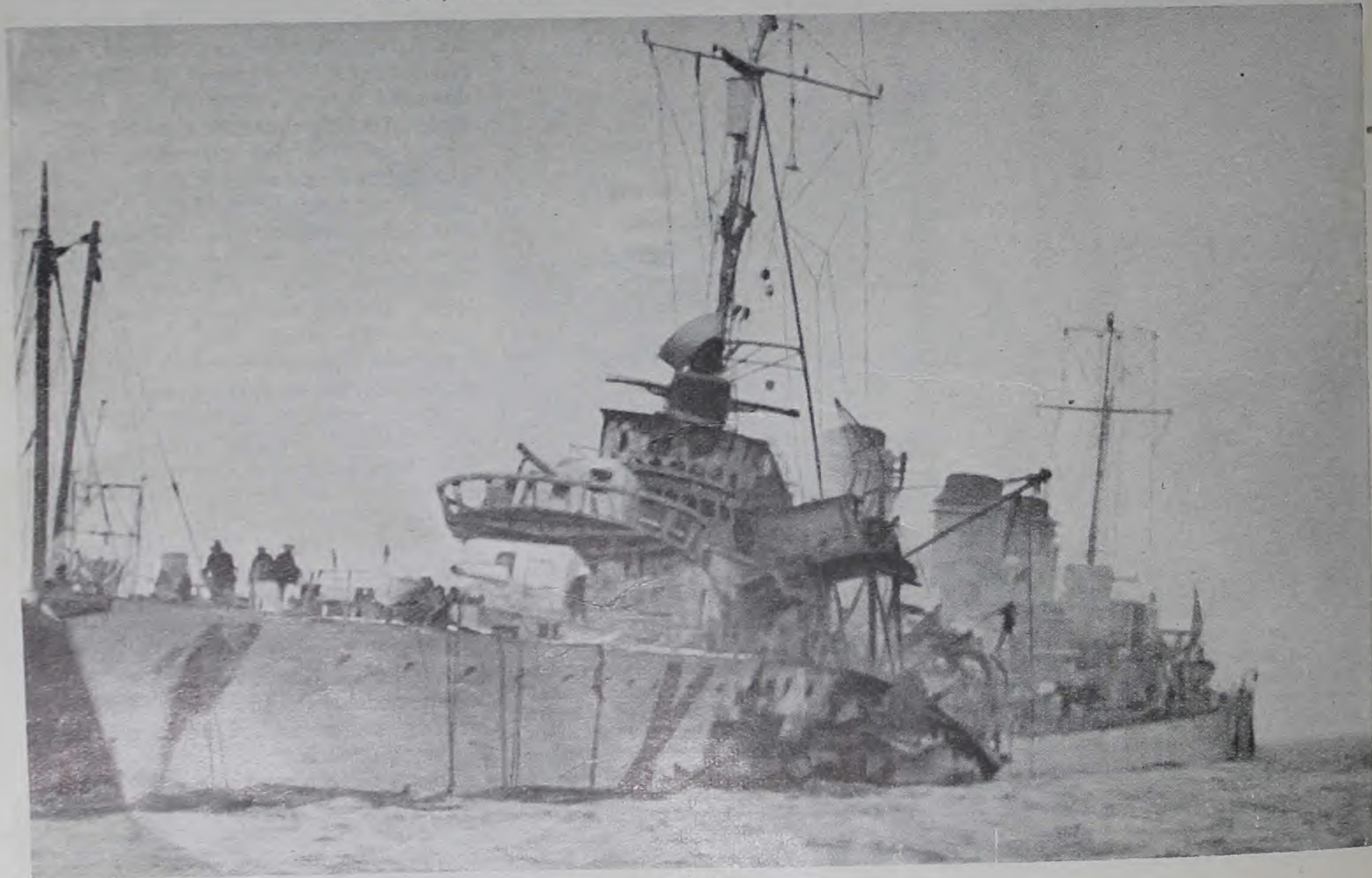
The work of the naval landing parties was invaluable. Their task was to fire the oil storage tanks and to wreck ports as far as possible—a mission carried out by the express desire of the Dutch authorities. Huge columns of smoke and flames in the sky testified to its success.

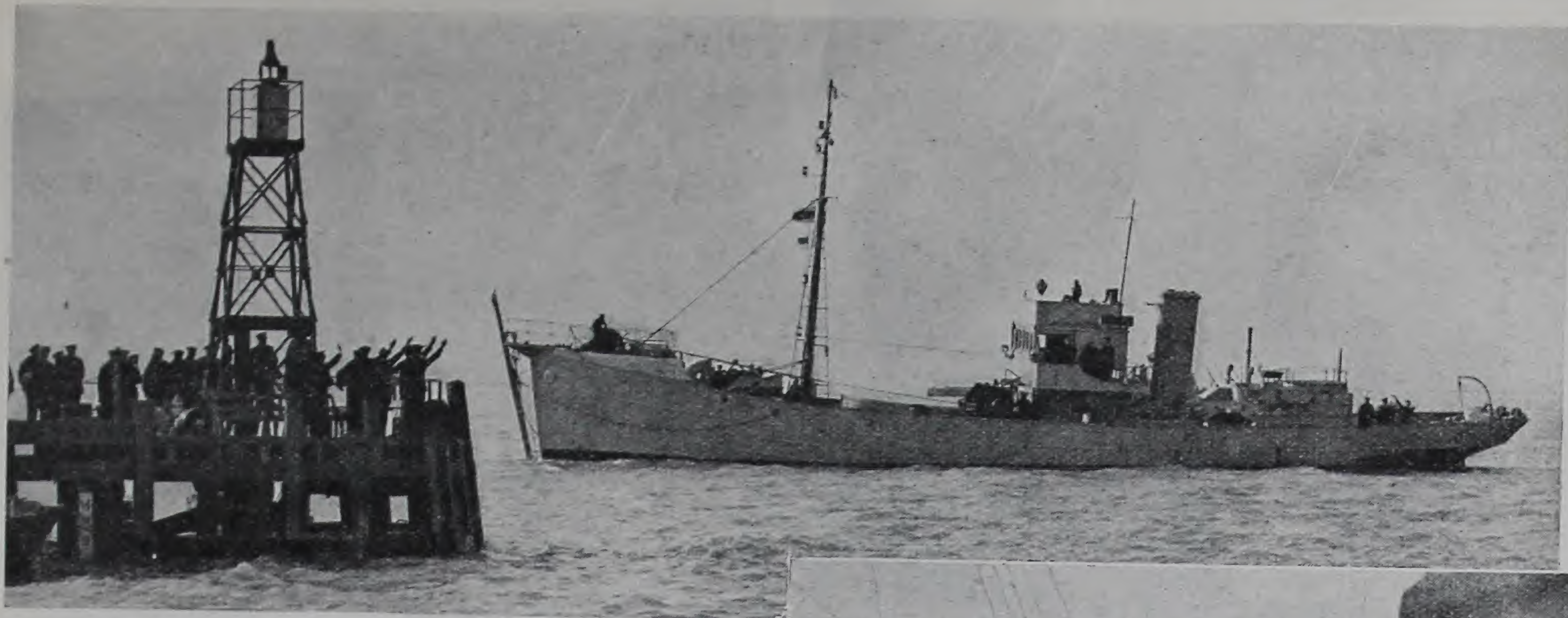
At Ymuiden a merchant vessel full of iron ore, together with a trawler, was sunk in the southern entrance to the port. Two floating docks collapsed; cranes, hoppers, dredgers and barges were sunk in the deepest part. After the lock gates had been closed the machinery operating them was destroyed by high explosive. A 12,000-ton liner was sunk at the other entrance to the

SHIP THAT BLEW UP IN THE NIGHT

In April, 1940, the French destroyer 'Maillé Brézé,' of 2,441 tons, blew up as she lay at anchor off a British port. There was heavy loss of life. Below, the damaged destroyer is seen after the disaster and shortly before she sank.

Photo, Topical Press

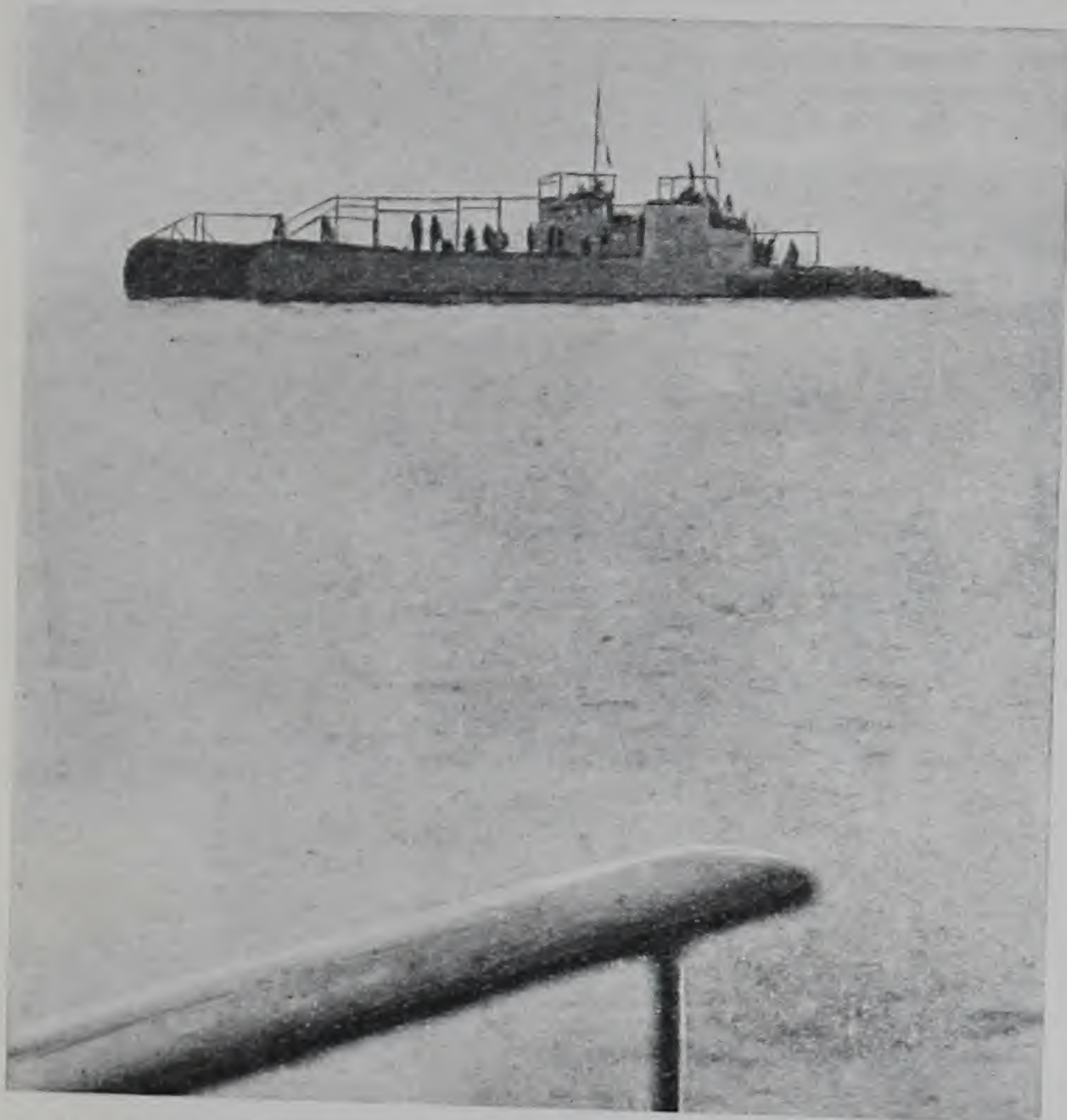




BRITAIN WELCOMES DUTCH ESCAPERS

Above, one of the many Dutch trawlers which put into English ports when their country was invaded. Below, the newly built Dutch submarines O.22 and O.24 which dodged enemy mines and successfully reached the English coast. Right, Dutch soldiers climbing aboard a British destroyer from their bombed ship.

Photos, Central Press ; "News Chronicle" ; Keystone



harbour, an iron foundry blown up, and a flotilla of hoppers sunk—thus, it was said, "completing a thoroughly efficient job carried out in the shortest possible time."

The accession of many valuable Dutch naval units to the Allied forces was one encouraging result of the Dutch surrender to Germany. These vessels comprised four cruisers, eight destroyers, 26 submarines, 10 torpedo boats, and a considerable number of miscellaneous warships. One of the biggest cruisers,

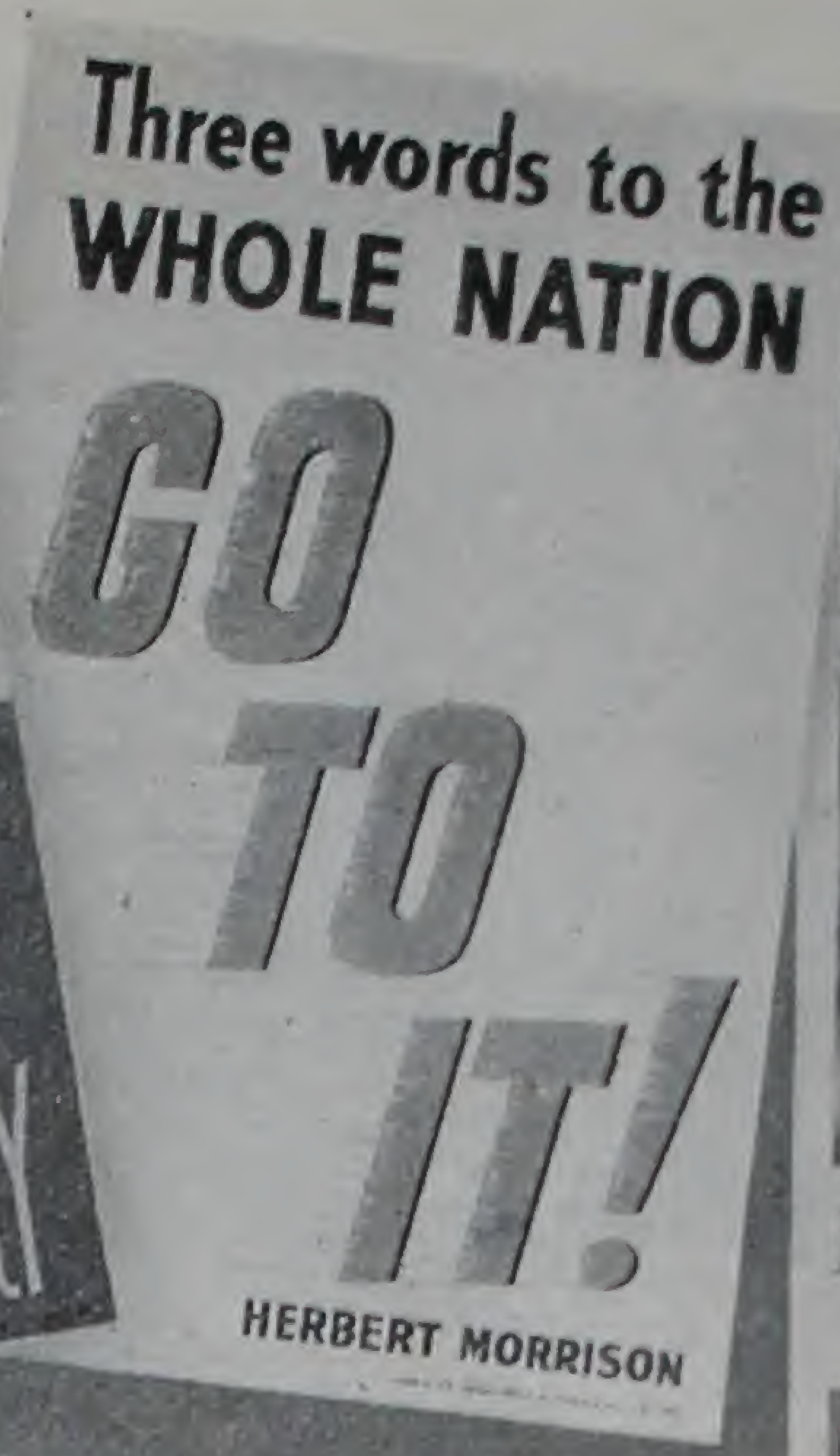
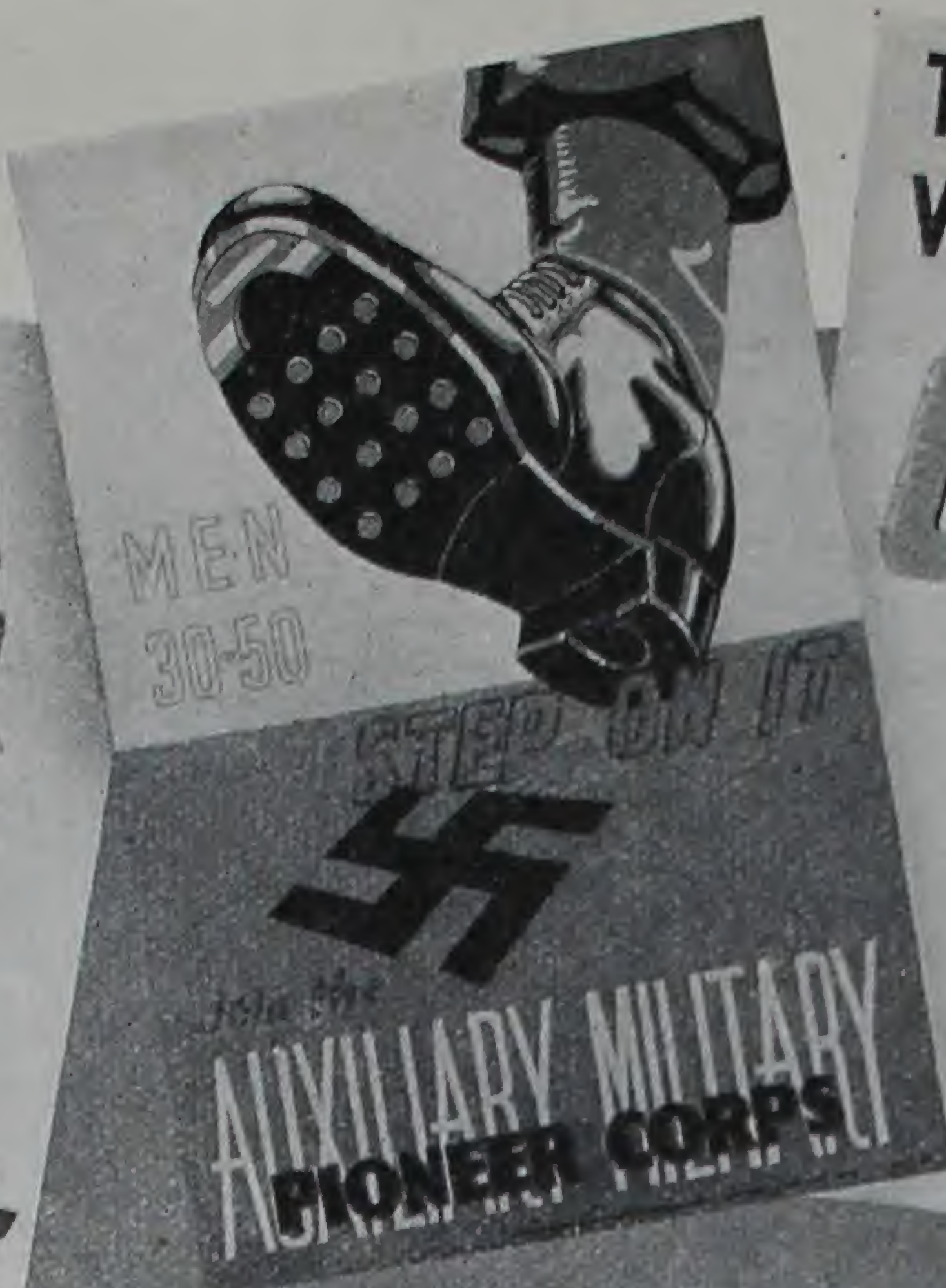
the 6,670-ton "Sumatra," immediately joined the British Fleet in the North Sea.

One of the most stirring stories of the invasion of Holland was of the escape of two Dutch submarines. In the words of Mr. A. V. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty :

"A particularly desperate and gallant exploit was performed by submarines O.22 and O.24. These vessels had only just completed building at Rotterdam and although they had not been degaussed (equipped against magnetic mines) and it

was known that the waterway was full of magnetic mines, their officers were determined to get them and prevent them from falling into German hands. If they were blown up, the object would be achieved and they would have helped to block the fairway.

"However, by skilful handling, the commanding officers succeeded in dodging the mines and getting them to the open sea, whence they proceeded to England. Thanks to such acts of bravery and determination, a very valuable part of the Netherlands Navy has been preserved to fight on with the other Allied Naval Forces until the common enemy is defeated."



HOME FRONT HOARDINGS ADMONISH THE NATION

Organizers of many branches of the vast British war effort were not slow to enlist the powerful aid of poster publicity to point their appeals to the people. Representative examples are here seen which, with those reproduced in pages 538 and 551, cover the period September, 1939, to summer, 1940. From the view-point of design, some of these posters were scarcely outstanding, but they did contrive to fulfil their primary purpose of conveying messages to the public. Points of interest were the use of photographic material in some compositions, and the commendable breakaway from Army tradition in the A.M.P.C. appeal.



THE HOME FRONT DURING THE EARLY MONTHS OF 1940

Agreement With the Railways—Subsidies for Essential Food Supplies—Evacuation Plans—Progress of War Savings Campaign—Cabinet Re-organized—Paper Shortage—Simon's Second War Budget—Growing Dissatisfaction With Government's Policy—A Change Demanded

THE early months of 1940 were marked by no sensational developments on the Home Front. The reiterated assertions of many in high places that time was on our side, and that we had only to continue the Sitzkrieg behind the bulwark of the impregnable Maginot Line to wear out

The reports from the Western Front were laconic in the extreme: a stalemate seemed to have been reached. Britain felt inclined to lean back and wait for the blockade to win the war. The Home Front went ahead, it is true, with its efforts, but the nation had not yet learned to "Go to it!"

On February 7, 1940, were published the financial arrangements between the Government and the four main-line railways and the London Passenger Transport Board which arose out of the control of these undertakings by the Ministry of Transport. Receipts and expenses were to be pooled (with certain minor exceptions), and out of the pool the transport concerns were to be paid annual sums, equivalent in the case of the railway companies to the average of their net revenues for the years 1935, 1936 and 1937, and in the case of the L.P.T.B., to its net revenue for the year ended June 30, 1939. Payment of these sums was guaranteed by the Government.

An important Declaration of Policy was issued on February 9 by the National Executive of the Labour Party, which called upon the British people to contribute their utmost effort to the overthrow of the Hitler system in Germany. The Labour Party, this declaration affirmed, "unreservedly supports the Allied war of resistance to Nazi aggression because, though loathing war, it regards this war as a lesser evil than the slavery which finally would be the only alternative." There followed a statement of the broad lines of settlement which the Party wanted to see reached after the defeat of Hitlerism, among which the chief points were: freedom and restitution for the nations overrun by Nazi tyranny; equal opportunity of access for all peoples to raw materials and markets in Colonial territories; bold economic and financial planning on a world-wide scale; and the right of all nations to live their

own lives within the new world-order. In the House of Commons on February 8 Sir John Simon announced that the Government had agreed to spend £58,000,000 annually in subsidies for wheat, milk, meat and bacon in order to prevent an undue rise in the cost of these essential foodstuffs. He explained that rationing had to go hand in hand with this policy of Government subsidy, lest the relative cheapness of these commodities should lead to an undue consumption of them.

New plans for the evacuation of schoolchildren in the event of serious



**MUNITIONS FACTORY
EXPLOSION**

On Jan. 18, 1940, an explosion took place at the Royal Powder Factory, Waltham Abbey, Essex, in which five people lost their lives and thirty were injured. Above, a church in the district which had many of its stained glass windows blown out.

Photo, Sport & General

the Nazis, had bred a feeling of complacency which acted as a brake on the national effort—a complacency which was to be rudely jolted at the end of the spring, when the Blitzkrieg which the Polish campaign should have prepared us for burst in all its fury.

But the country was still, as it were, sluggish from the black-out and the rigours of an exceptionally hard winter.



**WHEN COAL WAS
SCARCE**

The severe winter of 1939-40 affected the transport of fuel. Below is one of 143 special coal trains which replaced certain passenger services as soon as the thaw came, and enabled householders in the south to replenish their supplies. Left, Lord Portal, Chairman of the Coal Production Council.





AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS

Above, in the control room of London Area's Civil Defence organization during an air raid rehearsal, a plotting officer is registering localities which have been supposedly damaged. Right, a Lambeth A.R.P. warden wears a white "tin hat," easily seen during "black-out" hours.

Photos, Fox

air raids were announced by the Minister of Health, Mr. Walter Elliot, on February 15. This was to be a voluntary evacuation, but parents who registered were to sign an undertaking that they would send their children when ordered to do so and that they would allow them to remain in the reception areas until the school parties returned. This was a necessary step, since many of the children who had been evacuated at the beginning of the war had been brought back from the reception areas by parents who had either been unwilling to remain parted from their children—a natural if short-sighted view—or had considered the danger from air raids to be over-rated.

Sir Samuel Hoare, Lord Privy Seal, in a speech at Nottingham on February 17, reviewed the nation's effort on the Home Front. He stressed the need for the proper equipment of our fighting forces

Nation's Effort Reviewed

and for the maintenance of our export trade. "If we do not have the income from the sale of exports to countries overseas," he said, "we cannot expect to maintain through a long struggle our purchase of the commodities that are vital to our war

industries or essential to nourish our people." He urged economy in the use of food, since purchases of foodstuffs from abroad were the biggest item in foreign spending, and the necessity of growing more food at home. He stressed also the need of buying with discretion, and foreshadowed further increases in taxation. As a gratifying commentary on Sir Samuel Hoare's speech, the Board of Trade returns for January, 1940, showed an increase of £1,593,976 on exports as compared with January, 1939.



The War Office announced on February 26 that, as from March 11, North Scotland (the counties of Caithness, Sutherland, Ross and Cromarty, part of Inverness and Argyll, and the Inner and Outer Hebrides) would become a "protected area" under the Defence Regulations. No persons would be allowed to enter the area except those with official permits and permanent residents other than enemy aliens.

The War Savings campaign continued to make steady progress, and on March 1, 1940, the National Savings Committee were able to state that savings had reached a total of £100,000,000, made up of £50,500,000 in Defence Bonds and £49,500,000 in War Sav-

ings Certificates. Four days later Sir John Simon announced the issue of a war loan of £300,000,000 carrying interest at 3 per cent, issued at par and redeemable at par in October, 1959. On March 18 he told the House that the loan had been over-subscribed.

Further figures of war finance were given by Sir John Simon, when moving the Vote of Credit for a sum not exceeding £700,000,000 for war expenditure during the year ending March 31, 1941. At that time the three War Finance Defence Services and the Ministry of Supply between them were spending some £4,000,000 a day, and other war services such as evacuation, A.R.P., shipping, etc., were spending nearly a million pounds a day. When other expenses of the Government were taken into account the country, said Sir John Simon, was spending at a rate of £6,500,000 a day. Even this huge figure was soon to be greatly exceeded. The Agricultural Wages (Amendment) Bill, introduced on March 12, provided for the fixing of a national minimum weekly wage. The Bill

PIONEERS AT WORK

It was on Oct. 26, 1939, that recruiting for the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps opened, and a large campaign for the Corps was set on foot in April, 1940, with excellent results. Formed of volunteers between the ages of 35 and 50, the A.M.P.C. did fine work during the Battle of France. Below pioneers are erecting barbed wire entanglements on the East Coast.

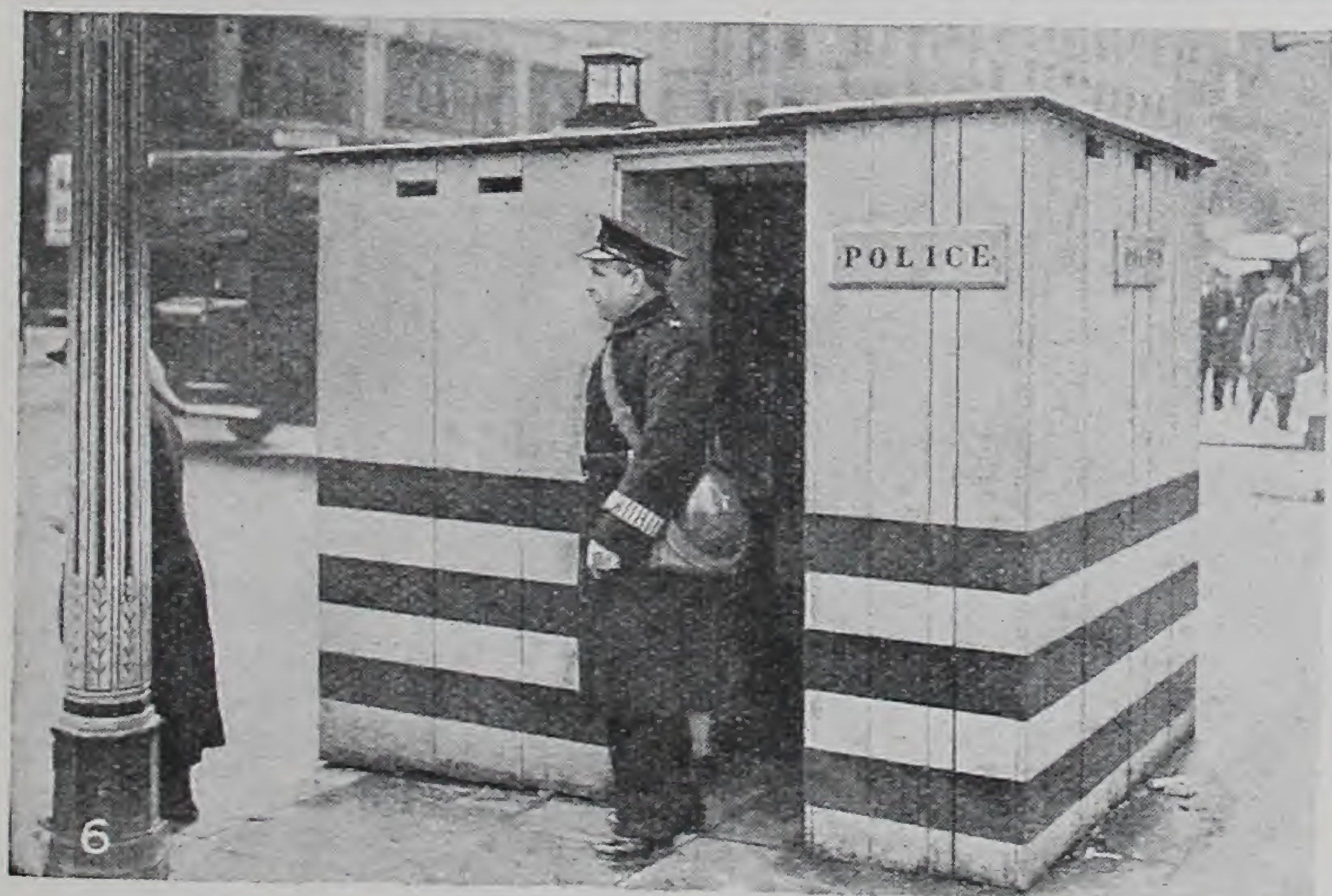
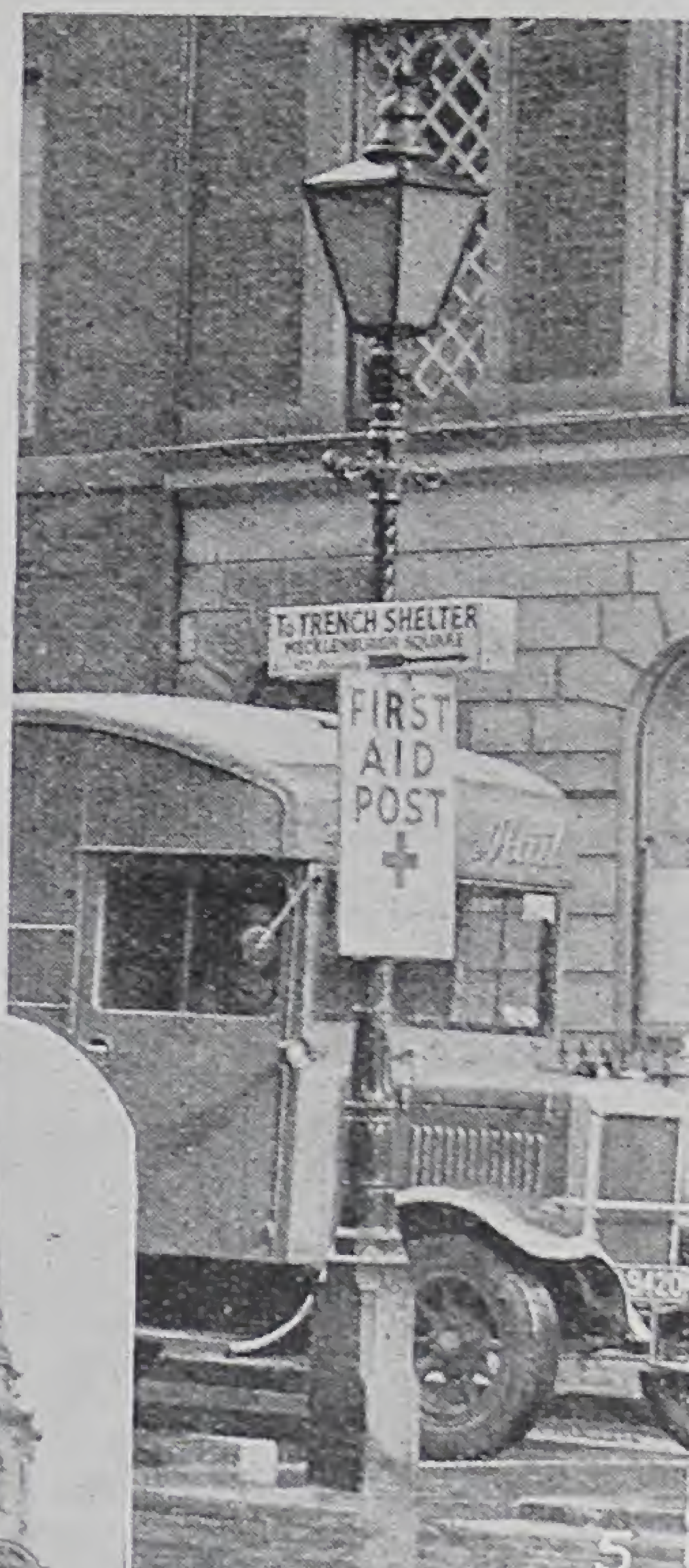
Photo, Barratt





LONDON WARTIME NOTES, EARLY IN 1940

1, Sandbagged Eros, in Piccadilly Circus, surrounded by cut-outs of the once familiar flower-sellers. 2, An office building in Kingsway with sandbags and windows neatly boarded up. 3, A barrage balloon at its moorings in a quiet London street. 4, Surface shelters in the Haymarket. 5, First Aid Post and Trench Shelter location signs on a lamp-post. 6, A War Reserve constable on duty at a sandbagged police box in the Strand. 7, An Information Office for the Forces in Trafalgar Square.

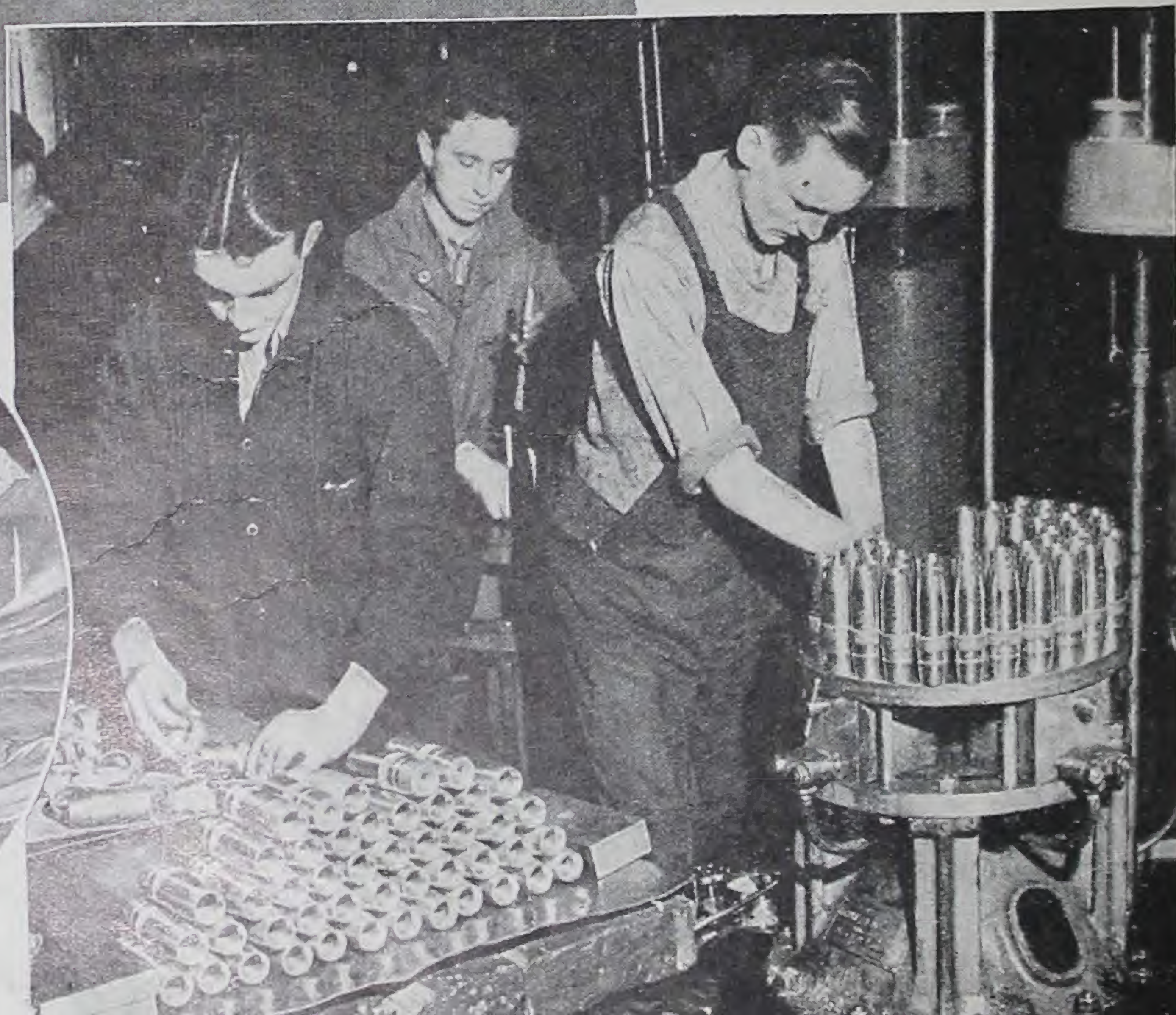




NORTHERN IRELAND PLAYS ITS PART

In this page are photographs of Northern Ireland's war activities. Above, land adjoining Parliament Buildings being ploughed for food. Above, left, young gunners of the Fleet Air Arm receiving instruction. Left, crew of an A.A. gun station operating a range-finder and predictor in concrete emplacements. Below, left, girls of a flax-spinning mill examining khaki linen handkerchiefs for the troops. Large quantities of clothing material for the armed forces were produced in Northern Ireland's mills. Below, fitting and pressing on copper driving bands for small shells.

Photos, Fox





WHERE A MINELAYING 'PLANE BLEW UP

Four members of the crew and three civilians were killed and over 160 people were injured as the result of explosions which followed the crash of a German minelaying aircraft at Clacton-on-Sea on the night of April 30-May 1, 1940. Above, the scene of the crash, showing the destruction caused. Left, an engine of the German aircraft.

Photos, Central Press ; "Daily Mirror"

Mr. Leslie Burgin drew a distinction between the regular business practice of remunerating agents by commission and the practice of attempting to bribe servants of the Crown. At all events, new regulations were put into force, making it an offence for any individual, in an attempt to gain some monetary advantage for himself, to represent that he was in a position to influence any person in the service of any Government department.

On April 3 Downing Street announced a reorganization of the Cabinet, and the following appointments, amongst others, were approved by the King: Lord Privy Seal, Sir Kingsley Wood; Secretary of State for Air, Sir Samuel Hoare; Minister of Food, Lord Woolton; Postmaster-General, Mr. W. S. Morrison; Minister of Shipping, Mr. R. S. Hudson; President of the Board of Education, Mr. Herwald Ramsbotham. No Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence was appointed in the place of Lord Chatfield, who left the Cabinet. One of the most interesting appointments was that of Lord Woolton, a well-known business man and chairman of Lewis's Ltd.

A sidelight on the economic war was afforded in a Parliamentary reply given on April 4, informing the House of the Government's decision to set up, under the chairmanship of Lord Swinton, a special trading company, financed by the Treasury and known as the English Commercial Corporation, Ltd., to assist in developing British trade with the Balkans.

The following day the Ministry of Mines announced the creation of a Coal Production Council. Its object was to increase British coal exports and main-

tain the supplies essential for the vast war work in progress on the Home Front. The Council was to be presided over by Lord Portal and would include representatives both of workmen and employers, as well as officials of the Ministries of Shipping, Mines, and Transport.

On April 15 the Aliens (Protected Areas) Order came into force. It declared eight areas adjoining important naval ports to be protected areas under the Aliens Order, 1920. No alien ordinarily resident in a protected area on March 29, 1940, could remain there without written authority from the Chief Constable of the district or from the Secretary of State. Similar permission was needed by visiting aliens. These protected areas (to which later others were added) were: Humber, Harwich, Medway, Thames, Dover, Portsmouth, Plymouth, North of Scotland, the Orkneys and Shetlands, and the Firth of Forth.

More Protected Areas

During this month, owing to the German invasion of Norway and the cutting off of Swedish supplies to this country, the shortage of paper became acute and a "Control of Paper" Order was issued, rationing the amount of paper and paper-board supplied by the paper mills to their customers. The rationing was drastic, reducing supplies to 30 per cent of the amount supplied or manufactured in the similar period during 1939. An immediate result was a big cut in the size of newspapers.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir John Simon, presented his second War Budget to the House of Commons on April 23. Among the heavy taxation made necessary by the war the following

established the principle for which agricultural workers had long been pleading—i.e. that a minimum wage should be fixed by a central body, instead of by County Committees. The central body in which was embodied the power of fixing these rates was the Central Agricultural Wages Board, but the County Committees were given leave to appeal to the Board if they felt that agricultural circumstances in their area made it impossible for farmers to pay this national minimum wage.

During March a storm broke over the head of the Ministry of Supply on the question of alleged commission-seeking by certain persons who claimed to have special access to the Ministry.

Storm Over Supply Ministry

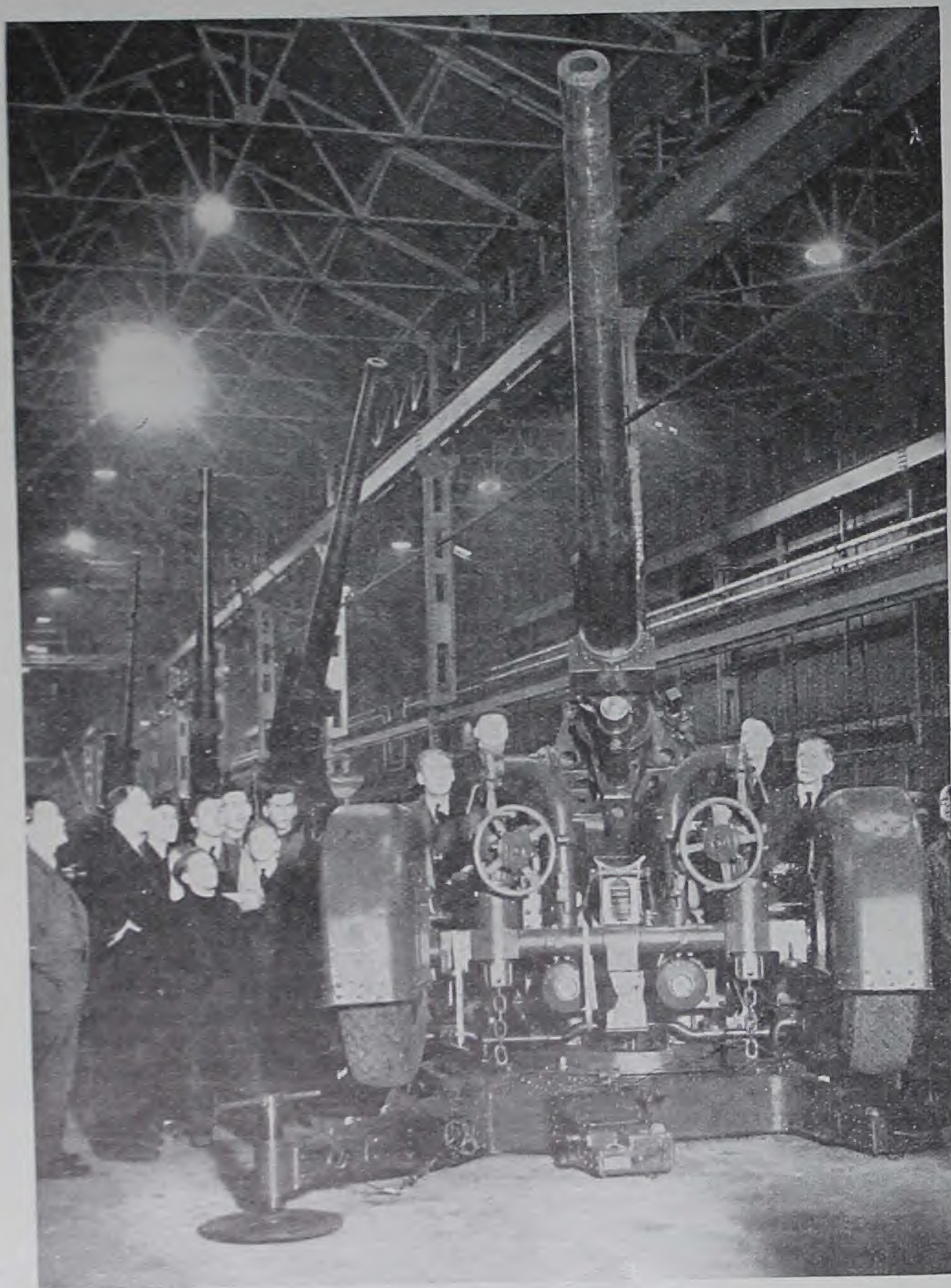
Mr. Herbert Morrison

cited cases in which would-be intermediaries had approached firms and offered their services to obtain contracts from the Ministry.

were notable items. Income Tax, 7s. 6d. in the £; surtax liability from £1,500 upwards; increase in the duties on tobacco, beer and spirits, matches and mechanical lighters, and an increase in postal, telephone and telegraph charges. The Chancellor also announced the introduction of a Purchase Tax, to be levied on all sales, with the exception of essential commodities such as food-stuffs, fuel, gas, electricity and water. The tax, which met with considerable criticism, was designed to restrict internal spending. The Chancellor's estimated demand for the financial year 1940-41 was £2,666,790,000. The revenue yield on the existing basis was £1,133,028,000,

leaving an additional £1,533,762,000 to be found.

The Budget was debated in the House on April 24-25, and the general criticism seemed to be that the taxation envisaged did not go far enough in view of the enormous war needs of the nation. Mr. Dalton insisted that the Exchequer was spending too slowly on the war effort, which he stigmatized as gravely insufficient. Mr. Pethick Lawrence opposed the Purchase Tax on the ground that it would drive up the cost of living and be open to grave abuse. However, a resolution by Sir John Simon that the Purchase Tax should be agreed to was finally passed by 145 votes to 46.



TERROR OF ENEMY RAIDERS

Here, in an ordnance factory in the Midlands, are completed 3.7 anti-aircraft guns of the type which made such a good show against the Nazi raiders. The craftsmen standing round have some reason to feel proud of their work.

Photo, Topical



WOMEN WORK FOR THE NAVY

At an important factory in the south of England engaged on naval contracts, women were employed on certain processes connected with boat building. Above, a girl, protected against fumes, is spraying deck planking with preservative.

Photo, G.P.U.

The beginning of May, 1940, saw growing dissatisfaction in the country over what was regarded as the complacent attitude adopted by the Government with regard to the conduct of the war in general—a dissatisfaction which came to a head when it was learned that the British forces had been compelled to evacuate Norway. In the great debate in the House of Commons on May 11, which led to a change of Government, reference was made primarily to the strategic conduct of military and naval operations; but dissatisfaction with the way the war was being conducted on the Home Front was forcibly expressed by Mr. Hicks, the Member for East Woolwich. He stressed the point that the various Departments concerned with war industries and supply had not expanded their ideas and organization to keep pace with the growth of the country's needs, and that they failed to consult, as they might have done, the leading representatives of British industry. He gave instances of bad organization and difficulties in the supply of labour.

On a vote of confidence the Government obtained a majority, but it was so small that, taken in conjunction with the temper of the House during the debate, the need for a thorough reorganization was shown to be imperative.

CHANGES AND CHANCES AT HOME

The spring of 1940 saw the British people completely united in their determination to win the war against Nazism. We give below excerpts from advice to custodians of the nation's food supplies, the text of a Franco-British undertaking so soon to be rendered void, and the moving speeches of Mr. Chamberlain after resigning from the Premiership, and of Mr. Churchill when he assumed office.

SIR SAMUEL HOARE, LORD PRIVY SEAL, IN A BROADCAST MESSAGE TO FARMERS, MARCH 11, 1940 :

FROM all sides I hear tell of the ploughs going up and down night and day. From all sides I hear of big farmers and smallholders, and the man with the spade who digs his own allotment, pushing on with the work. From one of the biggest counties I hear that they intend far to exceed their quota; from another county that they will finish in 23 ploughing days. . . . Let us lighten our ships' burden of foreign food, and by this means free our hands for victory in the war, and make our land richer and stronger for the days of peace. For the harvest will surely come with its reward for those who have worked for it, for our men under arms, and for our workers at home, and not least among them you men and women on the land of Britain. Not then in vain will have been the toil of sowing, the watching and waiting, the troubles and anxieties of war. For the end of a victorious war will be the greatest harvest home that the world has ever seen.

DECLARATION ISSUED AFTER A MEETING OF THE SUPREME WAR COUNCIL IN LONDON, MARCH 28, 1940 :

THE Government of the French Republic and his Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland mutually undertake that during the present war they will neither negotiate nor conclude an armistice or treaty of peace except by mutual agreement.

They undertake not to discuss peace terms before reaching complete agreement on the conditions necessary to ensure to each of them an effective and lasting guarantee of their security.

Finally, they undertake to maintain, after the conclusion of peace, a community of action in all spheres for so long as may be necessary to safeguard their security and to effect the reconstruction, with the assistance of other nations, of an international order which will ensure the liberty of peoples, respect for law and the maintenance of peace in Europe.

LORD WOOLTON, MINISTER OF FOOD, AT A MEETING IN THE QUEEN'S HALL, APRIL 5, 1940 :

TODAY, in my first speech as Minister of Food, I am going to call on the women of England to mobilize themselves on the Kitchen Front. It doesn't sound romantic; it doesn't sound grand; it isn't dangerous work—but it is vital to our victory. I want the women of England to go into training for the days which may come when the whole staying power of the nation will depend on them being able to keep up the energy and the spirits of the industrial workers of this country by feeding them sufficiently when supplies are difficult, when things they have been accustomed to eat and to use in cooking are no longer available. . . . We have to experiment now, when it is not necessary, so that we can be ready. We cannot be carefree because we have got the food; we must husband it, and while we are in this happy position we must consider and prepare for the future, looking at it at the worst.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN, IN A SPEECH BROADCAST AFTER HIS RESIGNATION, MAY 10, 1940 :

EARLY this morning, without warning or excuse, Hitler added another to the horrible crimes which already disgrace his name by a sudden attack on Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg. In all history no other man has been responsible for such a hideous toll of human suffering and misery as he.

He has chosen a moment when perhaps it seemed to him that this country was entangled in the throes of a political crisis and when he might find it divided against itself. If he has counted on our internal divisions to help him he has miscalculated the minds of this people.

I am not now going to make any comment on the debate of the House of Commons which took place on Tuesday and

Wednesday. But when it was over I had no doubt in my mind that some new and drastic action must be taken if confidence was to be restored in the House of Commons and the war carried on with the vigour and energy essential to victory.

It was clear that at this critical moment in the war what was needed was the formation of a Government which would include members of the Liberal and Labour Opposition, and thus present a united front to the enemy.

By this afternoon it was apparent that the essential unity could be secured under another Prime Minister. In these circumstances my duty was plain. I sought an audience of the King this evening and tendered to him my resignation, which his Majesty has been pleased to accept.

The King has now entrusted to my friend and colleague, Mr. Winston Churchill, the task of forming a new Administration on a national basis, and in this task I have no doubt he will be successful. . . .

The hour has come when we are to be put to the test, as the innocent people of Holland and Belgium and France are being tested already, and you and I must rally behind our new leader, and with our united strength and with unshakable courage fight and work until this wild beast that has sprung out of his lair upon us is finally disarmed and overthrown.

MR. CHURCHILL, IN A SPEECH IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, MAY 13, 1940 :

ON FRIDAY evening last I received his Majesty's commission to form a new Administration. It was the evident wish and will of Parliament and the nation that this should be conceived on the broadest possible basis and that it should include all parties, both those who supported the late Government and also the parties of the Opposition.

I have completed the most important part of this task. A War Cabinet has been formed of five members representing, with the Opposition Liberals, the unity of the nation. The three party Leaders have agreed to serve, either in the War Cabinet or in high executive office. The three Fighting Services have been filled. It was necessary that this should be done in one single day, on account of the extreme urgency and rigour of events. A number of other positions, other key positions, were filled yesterday, and I am submitting a further list to his Majesty tonight. . . .

To form an Administration of this scale and complexity is a serious undertaking in itself, but it must be remembered that we are in the preliminary stage of one of the greatest battles in history and that we are in action at many other points—in Norway and in Holland, that we have to be prepared in the Mediterranean, that the air battle is continuous, and that many preparations have to be made here at home. . . .

I would say to the House as I said to those who have joined this Government: "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat." We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many long months of struggle and of suffering. You ask what is our policy; I will say: "It is to wage war, by sea, land, and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us, and to wage war against a monstrous tyranny, never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of human crime." That is our policy.

You ask what is our aim; I can answer in one word: It is victory—victory at all costs—victory in spite of all terrors—victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory there is no survival—let that be realized—no survival for the British Empire, no survival for all that the British Empire has stood for, no survival for the urge and impulse of the ages, that mankind will move forward towards its goal.

I take up my task with buoyancy and hope, and I feel sure that our cause will not be suffered to fail among men. At this time I feel entitled to claim the aid of all, and I say; "Come, then, let us go forward together with our united strength."

BATTLE OF THE WEST: (1) THE NAZI INVASION OF HOLLAND

Hitler's Western Offensive Begins—Bombing of The Hague—Parachute Troops and Troop-carrying Warplanes—Fifth Columnists Aid the Seizure of Rotterdam—Failure of the Water Defences—Queen Wilhelmina Flees to Britain—Germans Capture the Moerdyk Bridge—Air Squadrons Plough Furrows of Destruction Through Rotterdam—Dutch Army Gives In

(See Chapter 144 for a revaluation of the campaign in Holland, based on information which later became available)

OFT threatened, long delayed, several times postponed, Hitler's western offensive was launched on May 10—that offensive which in the course of five days would overwhelm Holland, in eighteen days submerge Belgium, and before June had half run its course bring about the collapse of France as a military power.

If some observer possessed of a penetrative vision of superhuman capacity could have looked down on Western Europe in the early hours of that Friday morning he would have seen moving across the German plain in the direction of Holland, Belgium, and Luxemburg, five great armies—seventy or a hundred divisions of men equipped with the most efficient machinery of modern war. Like a flood the grey-green hordes moved on until the frontier was obliterated. Here and there the advancing columns were checked for a moment,

but ere long the stream of men moved on.

For some days before, the Dutch had believed that the German attack was imminent, and they had done all in their power to prepare for it. Their lines of defence were fully manned, the lock-gates of their famous Water Line were ready to be opened at an instant's notice, and already, indeed, considerable areas of the countryside had been flooded; their main roads had been mined, their open spaces covered with obstacles so as to make them unusable by aircraft, their bridges and every other vital point were under an armed

which soon swept over the country and its people like a tornado of fire and steel.

Nazi warplanes were reported to have crossed the Dutch frontier on May 10 soon after 2.30 a.m. By 3 a.m. bombs were dropped on the chief civil and military aerodromes. The main attack was made on Rotterdam, but every other place of importance, every vital centre of communications, was similarly treated. Heavy damage was caused by the descending bombs and by the fires to which they gave rise. Many aerodromes were captured by parachute troops dropped from the sky by waves of troop-



HOLLAND'S FIRST DAY OF TOTAL WAR

In the early hours of Friday, May 10, 1940, German bombers rained high explosive bombs on Amsterdam. Troops were soon patrolling the streets warning residents to stay indoors. Some of the heaviest bomb damage was in the neighbourhood of the Heerengracht Canal, and on the left is a section of the wrecked embankment near the Blauwburgwal.

Photos, Keystone ; Wide World

guard. They did what they could, but a few hours sufficed to prove that their preparations were pitifully inadequate to withstand the storm

carrying warplanes. Parachutists in uniforms of the Allies descended upon Dordrecht; others in various disguises appeared at Rotterdam and other places. The first of the parachutists stumbled to earth shortly after four o'clock, and in a short time not only was The Hague encircled but all the principal strategic centres, all the





THEATRE OF WAR IN THE WEST, MAY-JUNE, 1940

This map covers the whole field of action involved in the successful German onslaught on the Low Countries and France in the summer of 1940. The offensive was launched on May 10: Holland was overrun in five days; Belgium capitulated on May 28, and on June 22 the campaign was terminated by the conclusion of an armistice with France. Detail maps of various stages of the great battle appear in succeeding Chapters.

Relief map specially drawn for THE SECOND GREAT WAR by Félix Gardon



BY MINE AND IMPEDED THE

German troops reached the Yssel and Maas bridges on the latter side of the Wilhelmina Bridge structure opened in 1942, thereby compelling the western bank and units were seriously in demolition charges. This photograph gives a side view of the bridge. Illustrated on the left is the advance-guards to the capture of a village. It is delineated in white on the map.

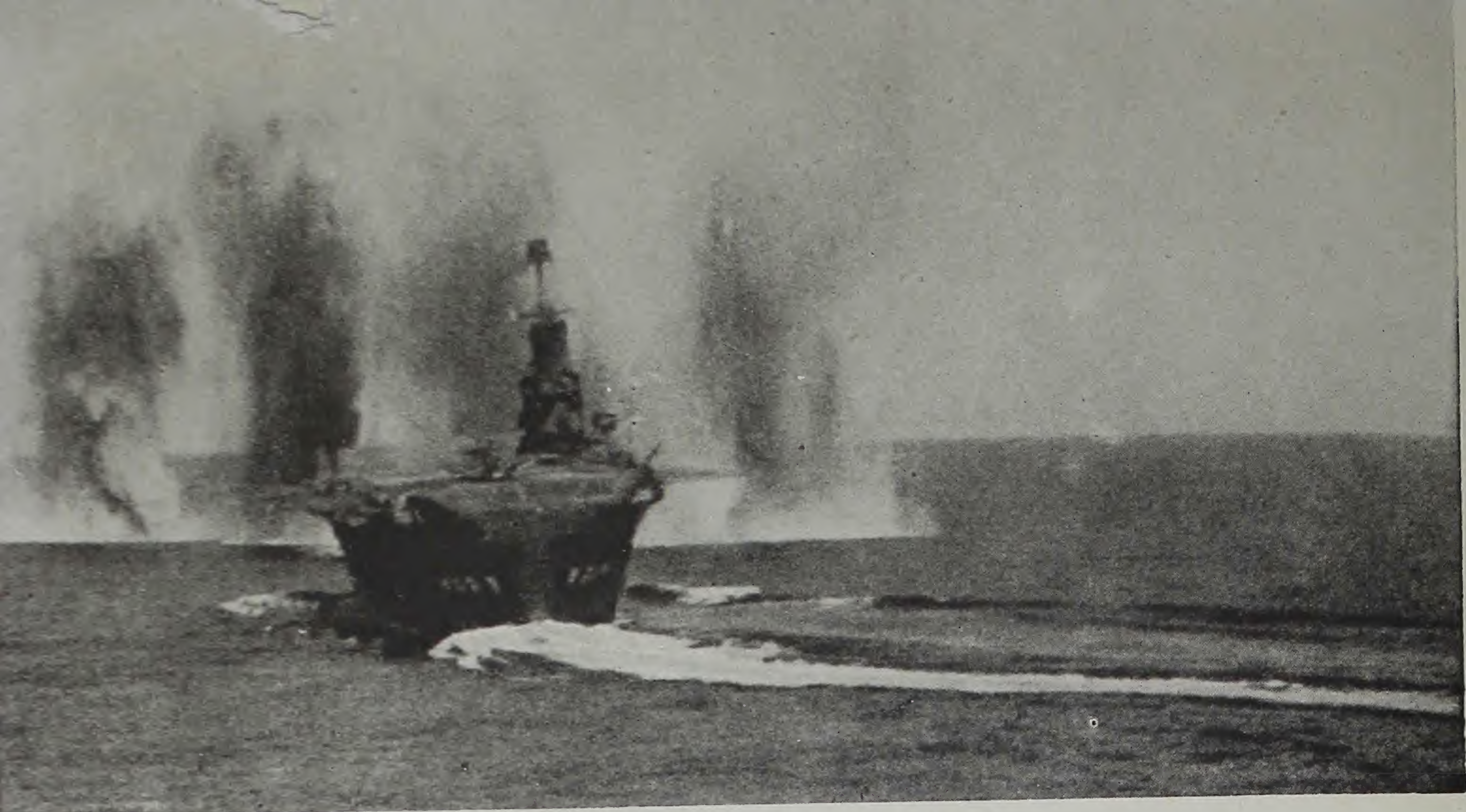
Photo, K...



K-TRAP HOLLAND ER TO THE LIMIT POWER

a first line of defence along
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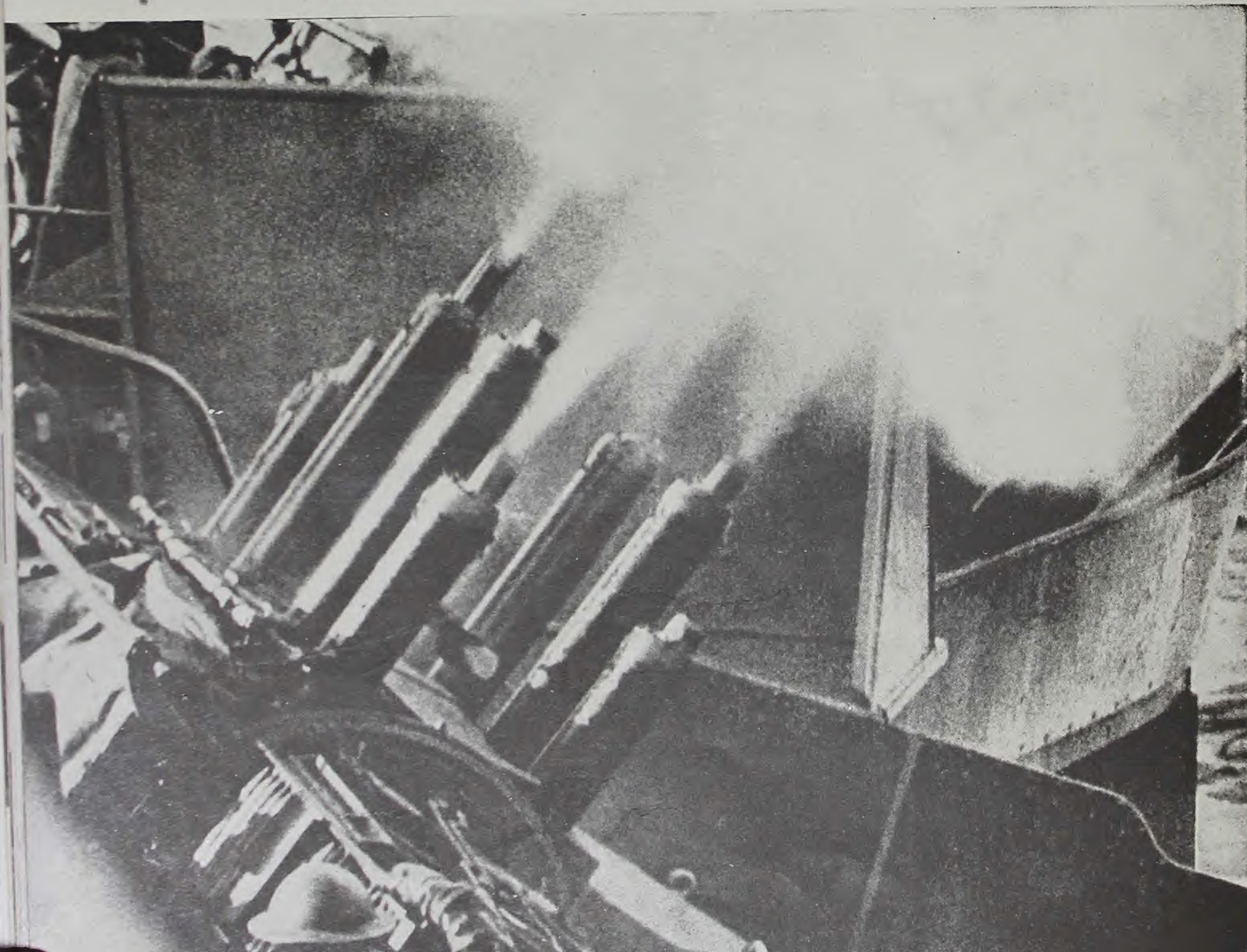
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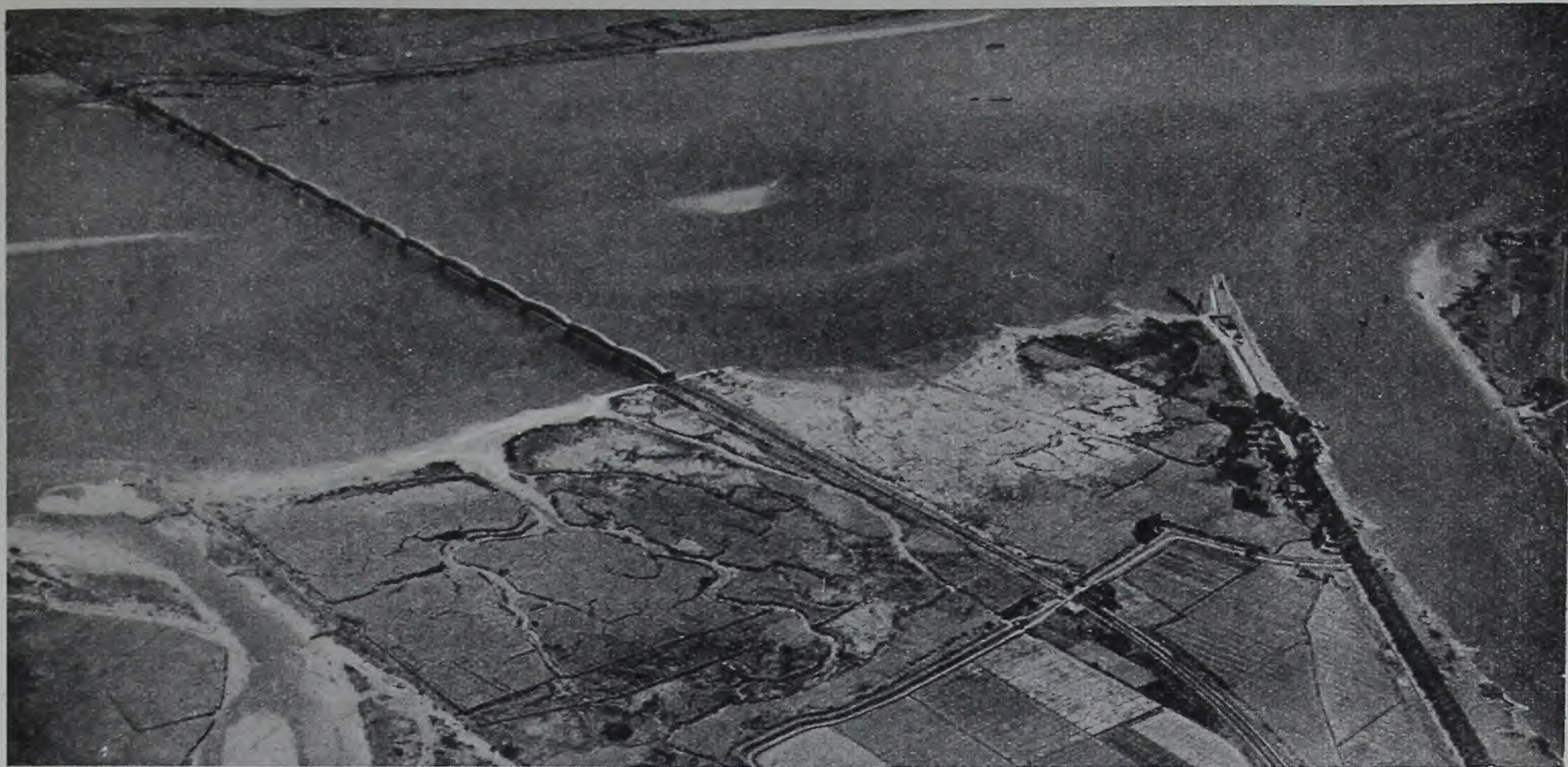


AIR ATTACK AND DEFENCE IN NORWEGIAN WATERS

The vivid photograph above shows great columns of water spurting up in front of the British aircraft carrier 'Ark Royal' (so often "sunk" by the German High Command), as an enemy bomber unloads a salvo which again fails to find its mark. Below, a battery of pom-pom guns from a naval unit is putting up a barrage of fire which drives off the Nazi raiders, their mission unaccomplished.

Photos, British Movietone News Film ; Planet News





BRIDGE THAT HELPED THE GERMANS CONQUER HOLLAND

The great Moerdijk bridge, here seen from the air, spans the chief estuary of the River Maas (known as the Hollandsch Diep) which separates North and South Holland. Strategically, the bridge is of major importance since it carries the main railway link between Dordrecht and the North and Antwerp. It was crossed by the German armoured columns on May 14, and its capture was one of the deciding factors in the Dutch decision to cease fighting.

Photo, E.N.A.

airports and the barracks, bridges, and locks, were being attacked by these walking arsenals. Numbers of these invaders were killed by the Dutch riflemen before they came to earth, and others were shot or overpowered before they had time to wreak their fancy of destruction. Many more, however, were only too successful, and so in the course of the day the whole of Holland became involved in a confused welter of fighting.



GALLANT DUTCH C.-in.-C.

In the face of overwhelming odds General H. G. Winkelman, Commander-in-Chief of the Sea and Land Forces in the Netherlands, put up a brave and determined resistance to the Nazi attack. But the bloody bombing of Rotterdam largely compelled him to lay down his arms. He was later taken to Germany as prisoner of war.

Photo, Planet News

At frequent intervals the announcers at Hilversum broadcast warnings to the population of the approach of Nazi troop-carrying 'planes above this town or that. But the ingenuity of the parachutists' disguises carried them past the Dutch defences. The main defence lines in the Netherlands are shown in the relief map printed in page 1515. The airborne invasion upset at the outset of the campaign all normal strategical plans, for the enemy appeared inside the country and struck at the main centres of industry and organization from within. Though at first the parachutists were few in number they seized key positions such as airfields and made possible the landing of troop-carriers bringing reinforcements. Much confusion was inevitable among the Dutch—both soldiers and civilians.

Some of the fiercest fighting was in the neighbourhood of Rotterdam. Here in the early hours of May 10 large numbers of Nazi troops were landed from transports which had made their way down the coast during the night, and managed to establish themselves in the harbour area. Enemy seaplanes landed on the River Maas, in the centre of the town. Troop-carrying aircraft landed on the aerodrome of Waalhaven. Even in the streets of Rotterdam there was fierce fighting, and soon the whole of the Old Town was ablaze as well as much of the shipping in the harbour

and the adjacent river reaches. In Rotterdam, as in only too many other places, the invaders were most powerfully and cunningly aided by Nazi sympathizers amongst the Dutch civilian population; indeed, in Holland as in Norway, the work of the Fifth Columnists was largely responsible for the eventual collapse of the national resistance.

Ere long the struggle had assumed a fantastic appearance. There was not one front but a thousand. Everywhere there was the noise of battle; every horizon was blackened with the smoke of burning homes. The Dutch soldiers and gendarmes put up a stern resistance after the first shock of surprise, but they were hampered on every hand by the enemy within the gates.

At the end of the day the Dutch General Headquarters issued a communiqué—the first for more than 100 years.

"German troops," it read, "crossed the Dutch frontier beginning at 3 a.m. today. Aerial attacks have been attempted on several aerodromes. The Army and the anti-aircraft artillery are ready. Flooding is being carried out according to plan. Up to the present, so far as is known, at least six German aeroplanes have been brought down."

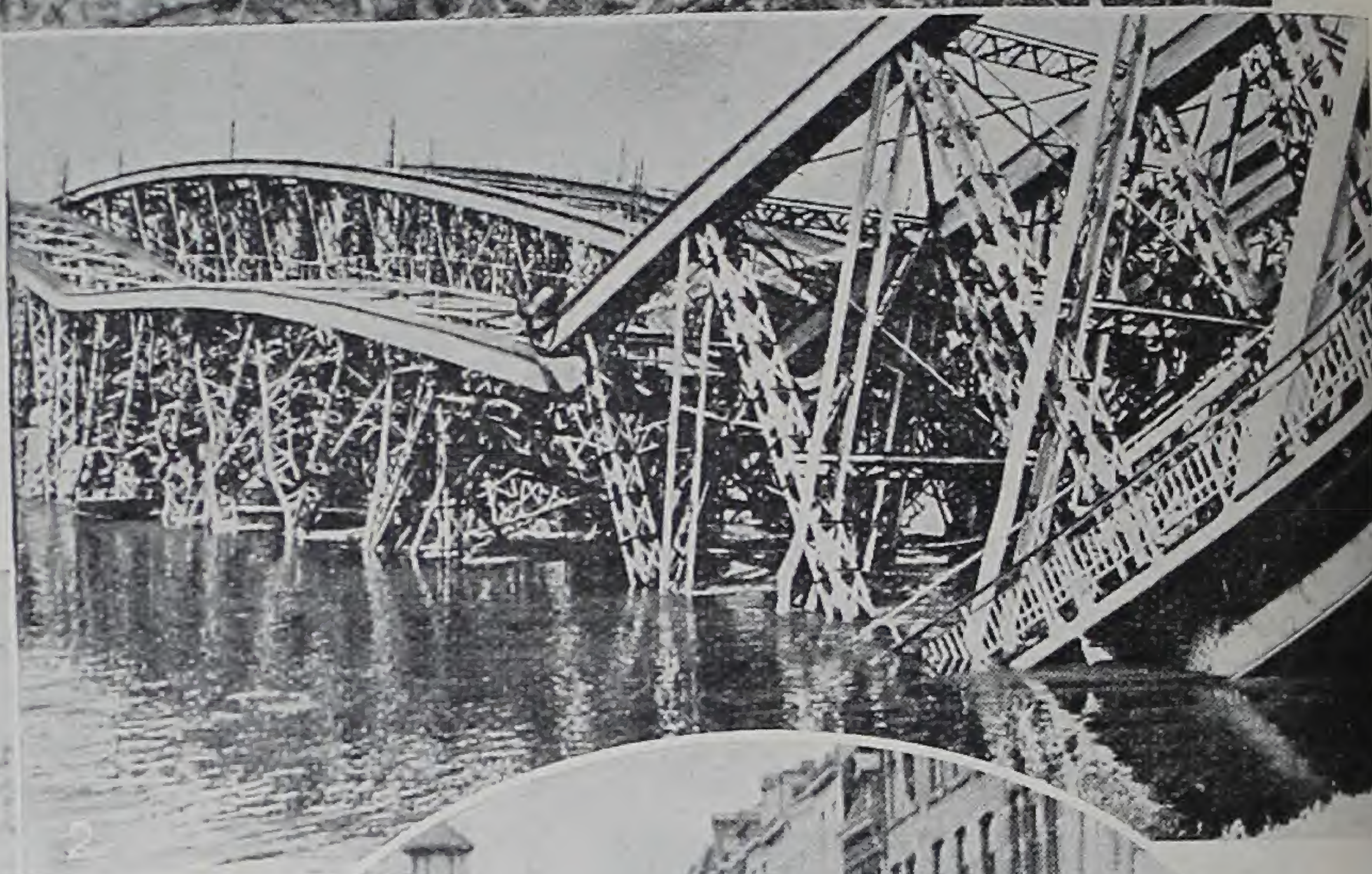
The next day the battle was renewed—indeed, it never really ceased—and not only was the pressure of the air

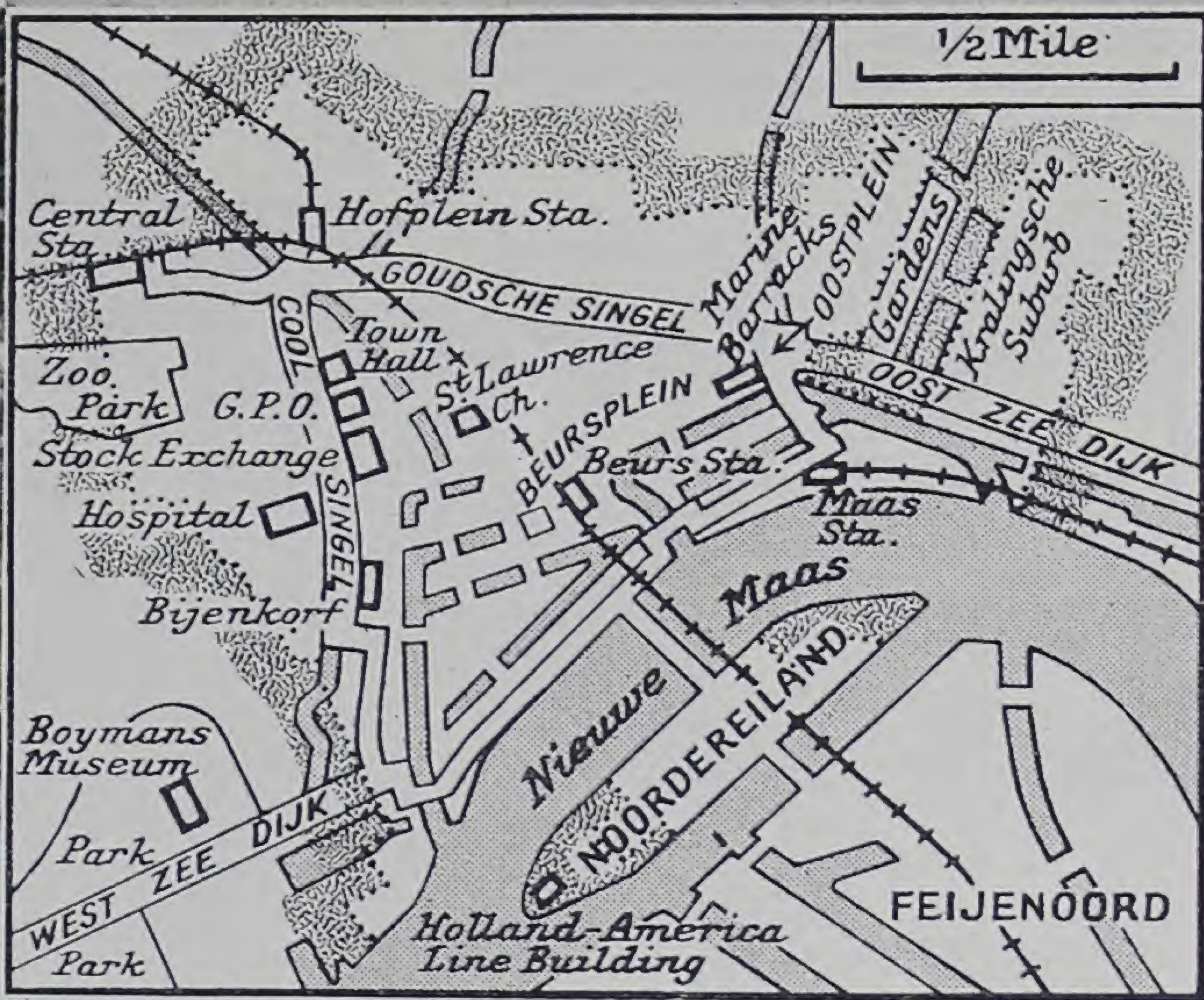
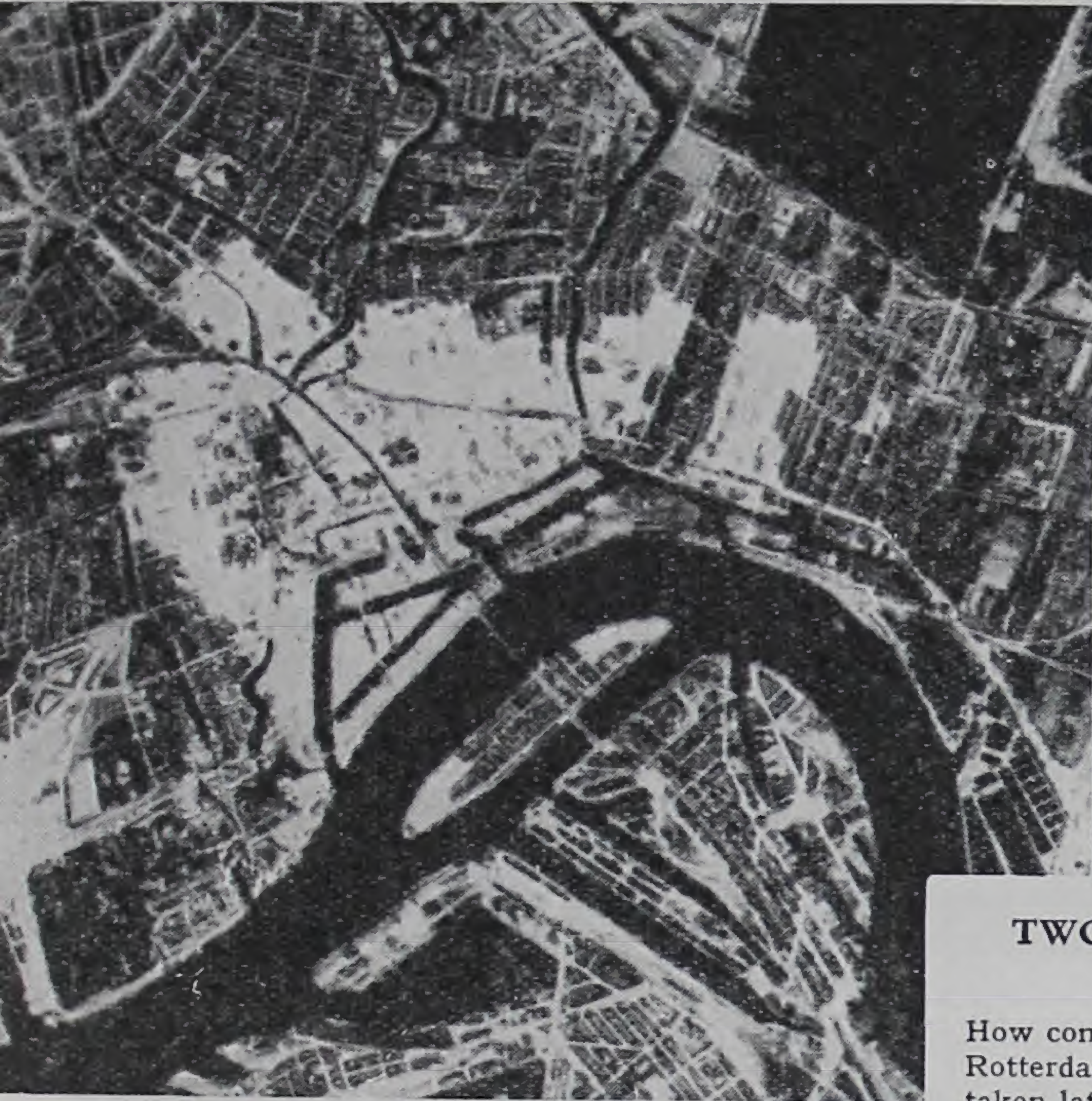
Work of Fifth Columnists



HOLLAND DEFIED THE AGGRESSOR

1. Troops of a Nazi Panzer division held up by a concrete road block, barbed wire and (behind the burning building on the right) a nest of anti-tank guns. 2. A demolished bridge over the River Yssel. 3. Trees dynamited to hamper the advance of motorized units. 4. Street barricades being removed after the capture of a town. 5. Fires caused by incendiary bombs at the Hook of Holland.

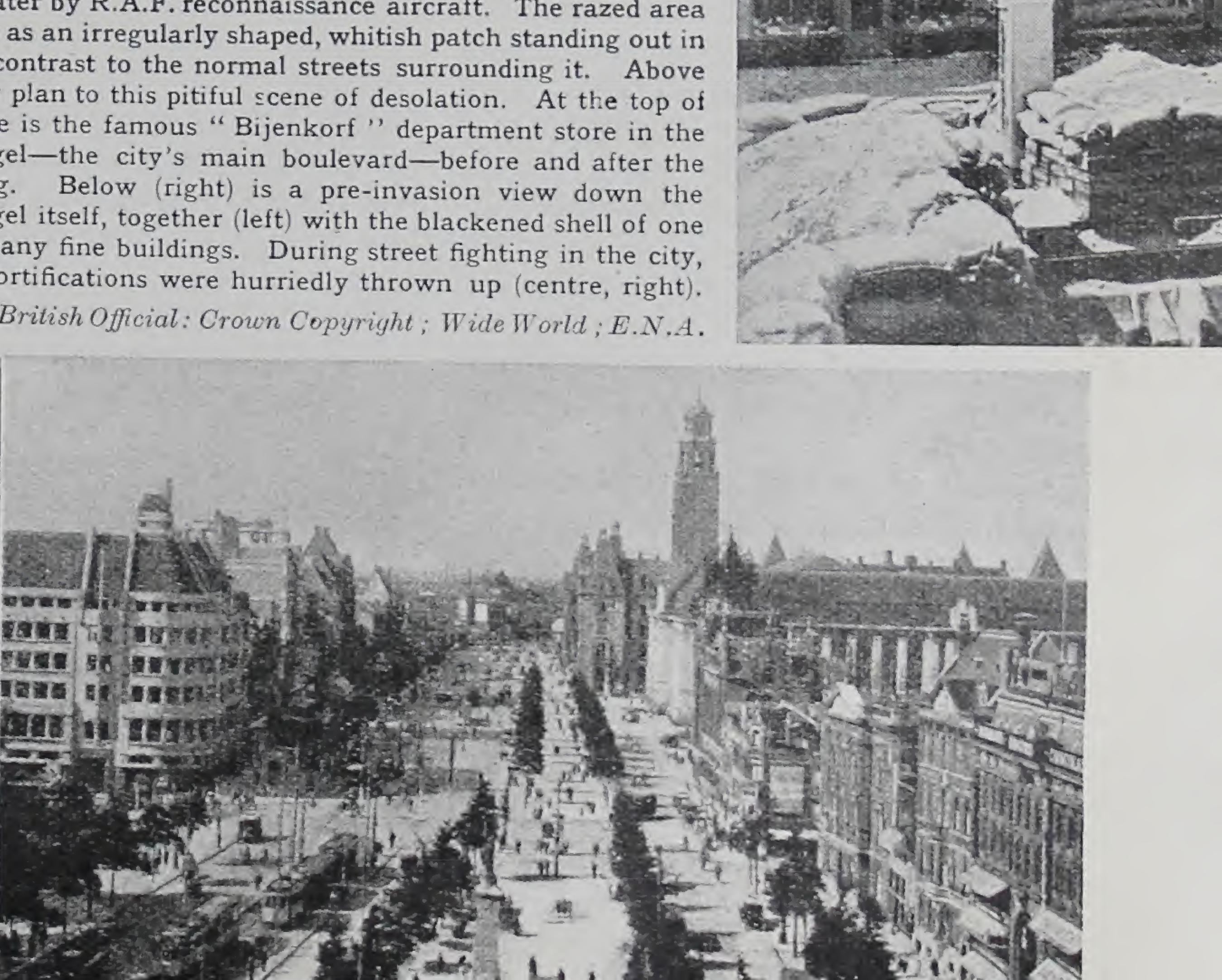




TWO SQUARE MILES LAID WASTE IN THIRTY MINUTES

How complete was the deliberate Nazi devastation of central Rotterdam may be judged from this photograph (centre left) taken later by R.A.F. reconnaissance aircraft. The razed area appears as an irregularly shaped, whitish patch standing out in strong contrast to the normal streets surrounding it. Above is a key plan to this pitiful scene of desolation. At the top of the page is the famous "Bijenkorf" department store in the Coolingsingel—the city's main boulevard—before and after the bombing. Below (right) is a pre-invasion view down the Coolingsingel itself, together (left) with the blackened shell of one of its many fine buildings. During street fighting in the city, rough fortifications were hurriedly thrown up (centre, right).

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright; Wide World; E.N.A.





PARACHUTISTS' PART IN THE RAPE OF HOLLAND

1. Vital supplies for parachute troops were dropped in containers such as this. 2. Parachutists await the order to descend. 3. One of the numerous 'fifth column' agents greets a group of his countrymen on their arrival. Note the latter's specialized equipment.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright: Planet News



attacks maintained, but on the ground the Germans compelled the main Dutch army to withdraw; in several places they forced the crossing of the Yssel

Water Defences Fail

and the Maas and over-ran the whole of the northern portions of the country. So sustained was the pressure, so swift the advance, that much of the demolition work which had been planned by Holland's military engineers was left undone, and so the water defences failed to justify the hopes which had been so confidently rested upon them.

Swiftly the position worsened. All through that week-end of blood and fire Holland witnessed scenes which for their savage fury recalled the worst days of the sixteenth century when Alva's Spanish soldiery put the Netherlands to the sword. At Rotterdam fierce fighting went on as the invaders battled to extend their hold. Along the

coast there were many landings, and Queen Wilhelmina and her daughter, Princess Juliana, were in imminent danger of capture. In the north the motorized columns reached the shores of the Zuyder Zee, though they were prevented from crossing by Dutch naval forces, supported by British and French motor torpedo boats. Still worse, the Germans, having pierced the main line of defence on the Yssel-Maas, were now pushing rapidly ahead across the Peel marshes and were threatening the Grebbe Line of defence which ran from the Zuyder Zee through Utrecht to the Belgian frontier. If this, too, gave way or were outflanked, then the invaders would shortly threaten "Fortress Holland"—that vital corner in which are grouped Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Leyden, and Utrecht. For a day or two the Grebbe Line did hold, but by the evening of May 13, it had been penetrated

and the advance guard of the invaders had joined hands with their fellows at Rotterdam and in the vicinity of The Hague (see map in p. 1515).

By this time the gravity of the situation was such that Queen Wilhelmina could no longer remain in the country. From the opening of the battle she had been by word and deed the inspiration

of her people, but now when the enemy were at the very gates of her palace and were obviously resolved on capturing her person so as to hold her as a hostage, she and her ministers took the "hard but necessary decision . . . to transfer abroad the seat of the Government for as long as is inevitable, and with the intention to re-establish ourselves at once in the Netherlands as soon as this would appear at all practicable." The Government, went on the message which she addressed to her people on the eve of her departure, were not prepared to capitulate, but it was left to the Commander-in-Chief of the Sea and Land Forces in the Netherlands, General Winkelman, to decide what measures could still be taken to maintain the war in continental Holland. The Queen was taken to England on May 13 in a British warship, and the Dutch Cabinet under Jonkheer de Geer followed her twenty-four hours later.

Wilhelmina Leaves for Britain

So dawned May 14—the day destined to be the last of Holland's five days' war. Early in the morning the Germans seized the Moerdijk bridge over the Hollandsch Diep, which separates the provinces of North Brabant and South Holland; with the bridge in their hands the Germans poured over the narrow stretch of water into Fortress Holland and moved swiftly northward to cut off Rotterdam and Amsterdam. With the land offensive was combined an intensification of air activity in which every centre of Dutch resistance was mercilessly bombed. Still the Hollanders

resisted, however, and so the Nazis determined to break their resistance once and for all by a display of terrorism of the most horrible kind and on an unexampled scale. In the course of the day two squadrons of German bombers flew backwards and forwards over Rotterdam and ploughed what were described as "veritable furrows of

in their thousands, but in face of the enemy's technical methods and their vast superiority in the air, they could fight no longer. Rotterdam, he went on, had suffered "the dire experience of total war," and Utrecht and other cities had been threatened in the same way. To have gone on would only have meant that still more innocent victims

would have fallen. "It was impossible to go on," he concluded; and yet, "Long live the Queen! Long live the Fatherland!" The only troops exempted from the order to surrender were those in Zeeland, where, quite cut off from their comrades, they were fighting side by side with French troops and British naval units.

It was impossible to go on, General Winkelman had said: how impossible was learned a few hours later when the Dutch Foreign Minister, Dr. Van Kleffens, stated in Paris that in the course of the five days' fighting the Dutch Army had lost 100,000 men—approximately a quarter of its total strength; some regiments, notably the Grenadiers, had lost 80 per cent of their effectives. Holland's entire bombing force—true, it numbered only some fifty



WILHELMINA THE BRAVE

Up to the last moment the Queen of the Netherlands stayed with her people, fortifying them in their hopeless struggle by her own courage and dignity in adversity. Only the imminent threat of deliberate murder or at least abduction compelled her to seek refuge in England, where she is here seen.

Photo, Wide World

'planes—had been wiped out quite early in the fighting. The troops in Zeeland continued to resist until May 17; on the other hand, most of the units of the Dutch Navy who were concentrated in the Scheldt managed to escape across the North Sea to English waters.

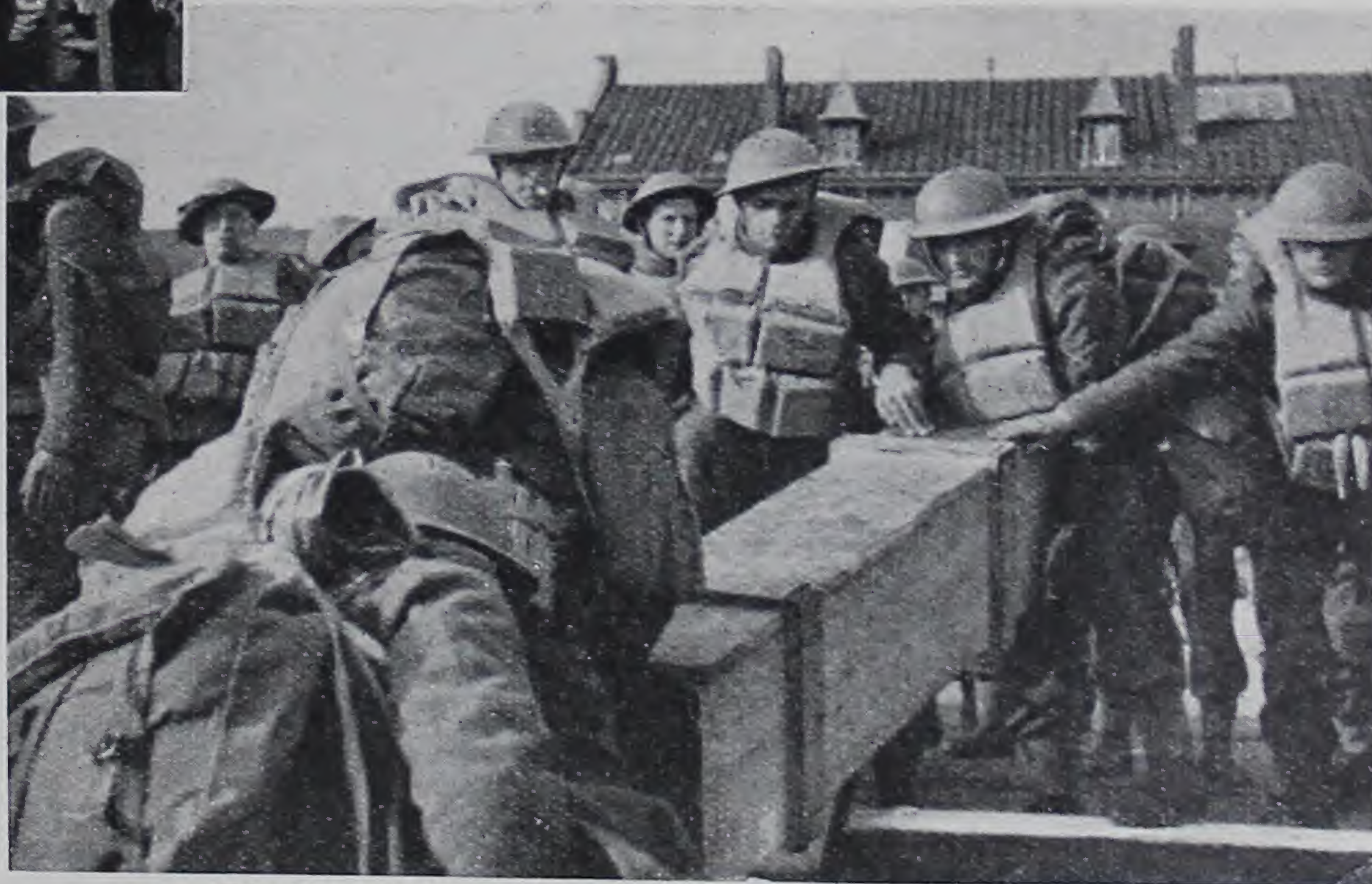
The war in Holland was at an end.



destruction" across the densely populated centre of the city. In half an hour nearly two square miles were converted into a vast heap of rubbish, beneath which were the bodies of some 30,000 citizens (*see illus., pp. 1516 and 1520*).

The murder of Rotterdam, combined with the military defeat suffered by their armies, convinced the Dutch that further resistance would be altogether useless, and that evening General Winkelman announced that Rotterdam and Utrecht had surrendered, and that, to save the civilian population, he felt justified in ordering the troops to lay down their arms.

At 11 o'clock on the same night the General explained in a broadcast that "we have had to lay down our arms because we must. We had decided to defend our Fatherland to the very limit. Today we have reached that limit." The Dutch soldiers had fought with courage beyond compare and had fallen



BRITISH HELP FOR THE HARD-PRESSED DUTCH

Though prevented by lack of time from sending powerful military aid to Holland, the Allies gave invaluable help in safely evacuating many civilian refugees and Dutch troops. Some of the latter are seen (top left) after being rescued by the Royal Navy. Demolition parties (seen above, unloading gear) were landed at Ymuiden and the Hook of Holland.

Photos, Keystone; Wide World



THE OVERRUNNING OF BELGIUM

By a combination of carefully laid plans, overwhelming numerical strength, and treachery, the Nazis crossed the Meuse rapidly and outflanked the Albert Canal defences. Above, German tanks and artillery making a detour when faced by a destroyed road. Below, storm-troops about to cross the Meuse on rapidly constructed pontoons.

Photos, E.N.A. ; Associated Press



BATTLE OF THE WEST: (2) THE BREAK-THROUGH ON THE MEUSE

Bombing of Brussels—Leopold Takes Command of the Belgian Army—Germans Cross the Maas—Vital Bridges Left Open—Appeal to Britain and France—B.E.F. Enters Belgium—Liège Holds Out—Capture of the Meuse Bridgeheads—Inverting the 'Schlieffen Plan'—The Germans Break Through

(An ampler account, based on later information, is given in Chapters 145-146. See also Chapters 147-148, on Lord Gort's Despatches)

THE sound of anti-aircraft guns in action against Nazi warplanes, which had made a sudden appearance above Brussels on May 10, was the first indication given to the people of Belgium that for the second time within 26 years the Germans had broken their most solemn promises to respect the neutrality of their country. By 8.30 a.m., when Hitler's Ambassador in Brussels, Herr von Buelow-Schwante, called on M. Spaak, the Foreign Minister, hundreds of German planes had already bombed Brussels, Antwerp, and other Belgian cities, and fierce fighting was proceeding on the frontier, where the Belgian troops, having blown up as many as possible of the roads and bridges which they had mined in advance in the "zone of destruction," were now putting up a stern resistance against the invader.

In their memorandum the German Government asserted that they had clear proof that a Franco-British attack on Germany through the Low Countries was in preparation, and that the Government of Belgium, like that of Holland, was privy to it and so cooperating. But the tissue of excuses was brushed aside by M. Spaak. When the Ambassador, reading his "incredible note," declared that Belgium ought to "stop a useless resistance," M. Spaak interrupted with the remark that he might suspend the reading, and then proceeded to denounce in the most biting phrases Germany's latest act of unwarranted aggression. The Cabinet

Germany
Invades
Belgium

met shortly after midnight, when it was known that the German divisions which for so many weeks and months had been concentrated just the other side of the frontier were actually on the march: their destination could be guessed. Following the news of Holland's invasion and of the crossing of their own frontier, the Belgian Government ordered general mobilization.

No time was lost, too, in appealing to Britain and France for aid. King Leopold, for his part, proceeded forthwith to take charge of the military operations.

On the eve of his departure the King addressed a message to his people. "For the second time in a quarter of a century," he said, "Belgium, honest and neutral in her conduct, has been attacked by the German Reich, which treats with contempt the most solemn pledges . . . I shall remain faithful to the oath I took under the constitution to maintain the independence and integrity of my country as my father



did in 1914. Belgium is innocent, and with the help of God we shall triumph."

On the same day Hitler also addressed his people. "For 300 years," he fulminated, "it has been the aim of Britain and France to prevent any consolidation in Europe, and especially to weaken Germany. The

German people have no hatred against the British and French people, but we are today faced with a question of life or destruction." After repeating the lie about the Allies' alleged plans to attack the Ruhr through Belgium and Holland, the Fuehrer concluded: "Soldiers of the Western Front, your hour has come. The fight which begins today will determine Germany's future for the next thousand years."

Finally, we may listen to the voice of France's spokesman, General Gamelin, the Allied Generalissimo. "The attack that we had foreseen since October was launched this morning. Germany is engaged in a fight with us to the death. The Order of the Day for France and all her Allies is the words: courage, energy, confidence."

For France, too, was attacked—France, who since September 3 had been at war with Germany, but only now experienced the full weight of the enemy's onslaught. During the early hours of May 10 several French civilians were killed in their beds when bombers raided a number of French towns, including Nancy,



UNHAPPY BELGIUM SUFFERS AGAIN

On May 10, 1940, for the second time in 26 years, Germany violated the neutrality of Belgium. Above, a special edition of 'La Nation Belge' tells Belgians that 'The German Has Come Back.' The upper photograph is of M. Spaak, the Belgian Foreign Minister, who in scathing terms denounced this new instance of German aggression.

Photos, Sport & General; Keystone



DEVASTATION FROM THE AIR

Here are two phases of the terrific aerial bombardment which was a feature of the opening of the Blitzkrieg in the West. Above, Brussels under a hail of German bombs; right, French soldiers clearing wreckage after the aerial bombardment of Nancy by the Germans on May 10, 1940.

Photos, Keystone

Lyons, Lille, Colmar, Béthune, Lens, Hazebrouck, Calais, Abbeville, and Laon. There was some fighting on the frontier of Luxemburg, for the little principality made the third of Hitler's new victims on this morning. The Belgian defence plans are outlined in page 1526, and the dispositions of the armies are indicated on the map in page 1530.

In the first two days of the offensive the critical point on the far-flung battle line was the "Maastricht appendix,"

The 'Maastricht Appendix' where Holland, Belgium, and Germany meet. The little arm of Dutch territory was overrun in a few hours, and the Germans, equipped with a tremendous mechanized force, threatened the crossings of the Meuse and the parallel waterway of the Albert Canal (*see map in page 1529*) which formed the main line of Belgian defence in the north. The bridges in Maastricht were destroyed by Dutch sappers, but the enemy crossed by a pontoon bridge built by his engineers. On May 11 the Germans took the key fortress of Eben Eymael (in the Liège group) and secured a crossing of the Albert Canal there (*see photographs in page 1526*).

Opposite Maastricht, and about two miles to the west of the town, there were three bridges over the canal. Here we may continue the story in the words of M. Pierlot, the Belgian Prime Minister, as he told it in a broadcast speech on the evening of Sunday, May 12.



"The officer charged with the destruction of the two bridges next to Maastricht," said the Premier, "was killed by one of the early bombs. This caused a delay in carrying out the order, which was used by the enemy to occupy the two bridges and to cross them with motorized units. Later on, however, one of our officers penetrated into the German lines, reached the mine chambers, and blew himself up with the bridge, thus sacrificing his life in the accomplishment of his duty."

One bridge still remained open, despite this gallant deed, and across it the Germans poured an enormous mass of tanks supported by hordes of aircraft, which forced the Belgians, despite their

fierce resistance, to withdraw as far as the outskirts of Tongres. In the afternoon they launched a counter-attack, but soon afterwards they were compelled to retire to new positions.

On May 12 a squadron of Blenheims of the R.A.F. bombed the Albert Canal bridges, and later that day six Battles made another attack and put the bridges out of action. Flying-Officer Garland and Sergeant Gray, of the leading Battle, were posthumously awarded the V.C. for this operation.

Tremendous attacks were developed on the Liège forts by heavy artillery, by bombing 'planes, and by waves of infantry who came on in such numbers that, said M. Pierlot, "the glaxis of

these forts is covered with German corpses"; but the main battle moved on to the north and east.

From the Belgian Premier's survey of the position—"the military situation is serious," he said, "but will be re-established"—it was clear that already the battle had taken an unexpected turn, and one for the worse.

The Albert Canal had been crossed, whereby the Germans had not only driven a wedge between Belgium and Holland, where the Dutch troops were putting up a manful resistance, but threatened to outflank the whole of the Belgian defences in the east and make a direct drive on Brussels and Antwerp. There was one bright feature in an

otherwise gloomy, even grim, outlook, and that was the speed with which the appeal for help made to the Allies was answered.

For years past, ever since King Leopold's denunciation of the Locarno guarantees in 1937, the Belgians had held Britain and France at arm's length and had refused even to consider so obvious a measure of precaution as combined staff talks. Fortunately, however, the Allies had laid plans for such an eventuality as had now come about, and since the arrival of the British Expeditionary Force in France in the autumn of 1939 large forces of British troops, supported by French divisions, had occupied positions on the French side of the Belgian frontier,



WAR COMES TO LUXEMBURG

The pathetic exodus of refugees from the invaded countries began on May 10, 1940, when Nazi hordes swept over the Low Countries. Above, peasants of Luxembourg are seen fleeing into France driving their cows before them. Left, a Nazi patrol walking down the deserted streets of the town of Luxemburg. Below, a French tank arriving in a village of the Duchy.

Photos, Associated Press; Service Géographique de l'Armée



cycles and in lorries, moved along the cobbled roads in one continuous stream. The inhabitants greeted them with immense enthusiasm; the Belgian girls plucked lilac from the roadside bushes and threw it to the soldiers, and at every stop mugs of beer were promptly forthcoming. "The British are here," was the phrase that passed from mouth to mouth, and the news brought fresh hope and encouragement to a little country already reeling beneath the

where they had spent the winter in strengthening the extension of the Maginot Line that reached the coast near Dunkirk.

The appeal was handed to the British and French Ambassadors in the early hours of May 10, and between six and seven o'clock in the morning a highly mechanized British Army had reached the Belgian frontier. "Leading elements of the B.E.F. in cooperation with the French Army entered Belgium today," read a communiqué issued by British G.H.Q. on May 10. They were accorded a great welcome by the Belgian populace. As soon as the frontier barriers had been raised the British troops poured into Belgium—tanks, armoured cars, men on motor-





B.E.F. ADVANCE GUARDS IN BELGIUM

As soon as Belgium called for assistance, British troops moved forward to her defence. Some of the advance guards are seen in the photograph above crossing the Belgian frontier at night. Below, a Belgian girl offers a bouquet to two smiling British soldiers of a motor-cycle detachment.

Photos, Section Cinéma de l'Armée ; British Official : Crown Copyright



hammer strokes of a lightning onslaught carried out by the greatest military power in the world. In the course of centuries many British armies have marched into Belgium, sometimes as enemies, more often as friends and allies, but never was a British army received with such raptures of enthusiasm as on this occasion, or given so heart-felt a welcome.

While Belgium was being invaded by friends from the west, the enemy proceeded with his invasion on the east. Having crossed the Meuse and virtually outflanked the Albert Canal defences, the German mechanized forces continued their progress, their way made clear by attacks delivered by an enormous horde of bombing 'planes. Scores of German tanks were knocked out, hundreds of 'planes were brought down, but their numbers were replenished from an apparently inexhaustible reservoir.

Canal
Line
Outflanked

In spite of fierce counter-attacks carried out with great bravery, the Germans moved rapidly ahead, and soon their advanced elements were stated to be at Waremmes, some 16 miles west of Liège on the main railway to Louvain and Brussels. This was on Sunday, May 12, and that same night details were given of the capture (on the 11th) of Eben Emael, the outlying fort of Liège, which had been completed only of recent years and was held to be one of the strongest in Europe. It had been forced to capitulate when its great concrete walls had been battered by shellfire and bombed into ruin, and parachutists had slain the garrison by dropping hand-grenades down the casemate openings and by laying mines which blew them sky-high. (See the remarkable photographs printed in pages 1526-1527.)

Meanwhile, the British and French moving into Belgium continued their progress, hardly interrupted by attacks from the German air arm; indeed, this immunity was deemed suspicious at the time, and later the suspicions were confirmed when it was realized that it suited Germany's plans that the B.E.F. should be so fully involved in Belgium when the attack on the flank developed.

B.E.F. in
the Belgian
Trap

(The reader should refer to Chapter 148 dealing with Lord Gort's Despatches covering these operations.)

Early in the morning of May 13 British G.H.Q. announced that "minor encounters between British cavalry"—by cavalry, tanks were meant—"and the enemy have ended to our advantage." Now there developed a gigantic struggle between largely mechanized forces as the Germans, having forced

the crossing of the Albert Canal near Hasselt, poured westwards in the direction of Brussels, while a subsidiary force was left to contain the forts at Liège which were still maintaining the struggle. Before the mass of armour hurled against them, the Belgian troops fell back from the salient in which they had been caught between the Meuse and the Albert Canal, and endeavoured to form a fresh defence line in front of Antwerp and Louvain.

But this line, too, was threatened when the Germans developed a general offensive against the Franco-Belgian defences on the Meuse and in the Ardennes. This region, hilly and heavily wooded, had been dotted with concrete machine-gun posts, but was only lightly held, as it had been thought that the nature of the country would prove a considerable obstacle to the advancing mechanized forces. That hope, like so many others, was speedily dissipated when the German columns penetrated the Ardennes in force and, approaching by way of Luxembourg, delivered a fierce attack against the French line in the Longwy area.

Indeed, south of Liège—upon whose citadel the swastika flag was now flying, if German report spoke true, though the eastern forts still held out—the enemy

advance was rapid as in the north. By May 14 the Nazis had reached the banks of the Meuse west of Liège, and their advance guards were within sight of the great fortress of Namur. From Namur to Sedan they were within striking distance of the Meuse bridgeheads. The French communiqué issued that night spoke of German attempts to cross the river south of Namur at several points. "We have launched counter-attacks and the fighting continues, more especially in the region of Sedan, where the enemy is making a momentous effort with furious obstinacy and at the expense of heavy casualties." The communiqué issued earlier in the day had announced that Sedan had been evacuated and that the battle had now extended from the Meuse at Sedan to the Moselle north of Metz.

Although the main German armoured forces were now being flung against the Allied line along the Meuse south of Namur, there was no relaxation of the pressure in the north. The Germans lost no time in developing to the full the advantage they had gained when they broke through on the Albert Canal. The Belgian Army, heavily outnumbered from the beginning and now wasted by days of furious battle, was rallied on the new defence line in front of Antwerp and



THE B.E.F. ENTERS BELGIUM

In this page British troops are seen as they moved into Belgium in the first week of May to help the hard-pressed Belgian army. Top, R.E.'s taking up a frontier post to enable troops and supplies to move forward freely. Centre, a motor-cycle detachment passing the Belgian frontier. Below, cheering Belgians greet a British gun-team.



Louvain, but it was already showing signs of severe shock and imminent disorganization. Moreover, its withdrawal to its new positions was severely hampered by the great flood of refugees who crowded the roads as they fled in terror from the towns and villages, from the homes and farmsteads, which were menaced by the German advance or had already been destroyed by their bombing planes. The disorder was increased by the operations of Nazi parachutists, who were employed as they had been employed only too successfully in Holland a day or two before, to work havoc and destruction behind the actual fighting line.

Joined with the Belgians in their new



FRANCE ADVANCES, OVER-CONFIDENT

A column of French troops is here seen passing along a Belgian road near the frontier. But they proved ill-equipped to meet the terrific onslaught of the massed German armoured divisions. Though not lacking in courage, they had not visualized the true character of the Blitzkrieg.

Photo, Topical

BELGES!
L'ARMÉE FRANÇAISE vient à votre secours
pour vous protéger contre un
ennemi qui n'a aucun respect pour
les principes et pour sauver

FRANCE PROMISES SUCCOUR

Belgians reading a proclamation informing them that the French army was on its way to aid them. It begins, as shown in the close-up below, "Belgians, the French Army is coming to your aid to protect you against an enemy which has no respect for the Rights of Peoples. . . ." Unhappily, the lack of previous staff talks, due to Belgium's belief in neutrality, minimized the effect of Allied aid.

Photos, Associated Press

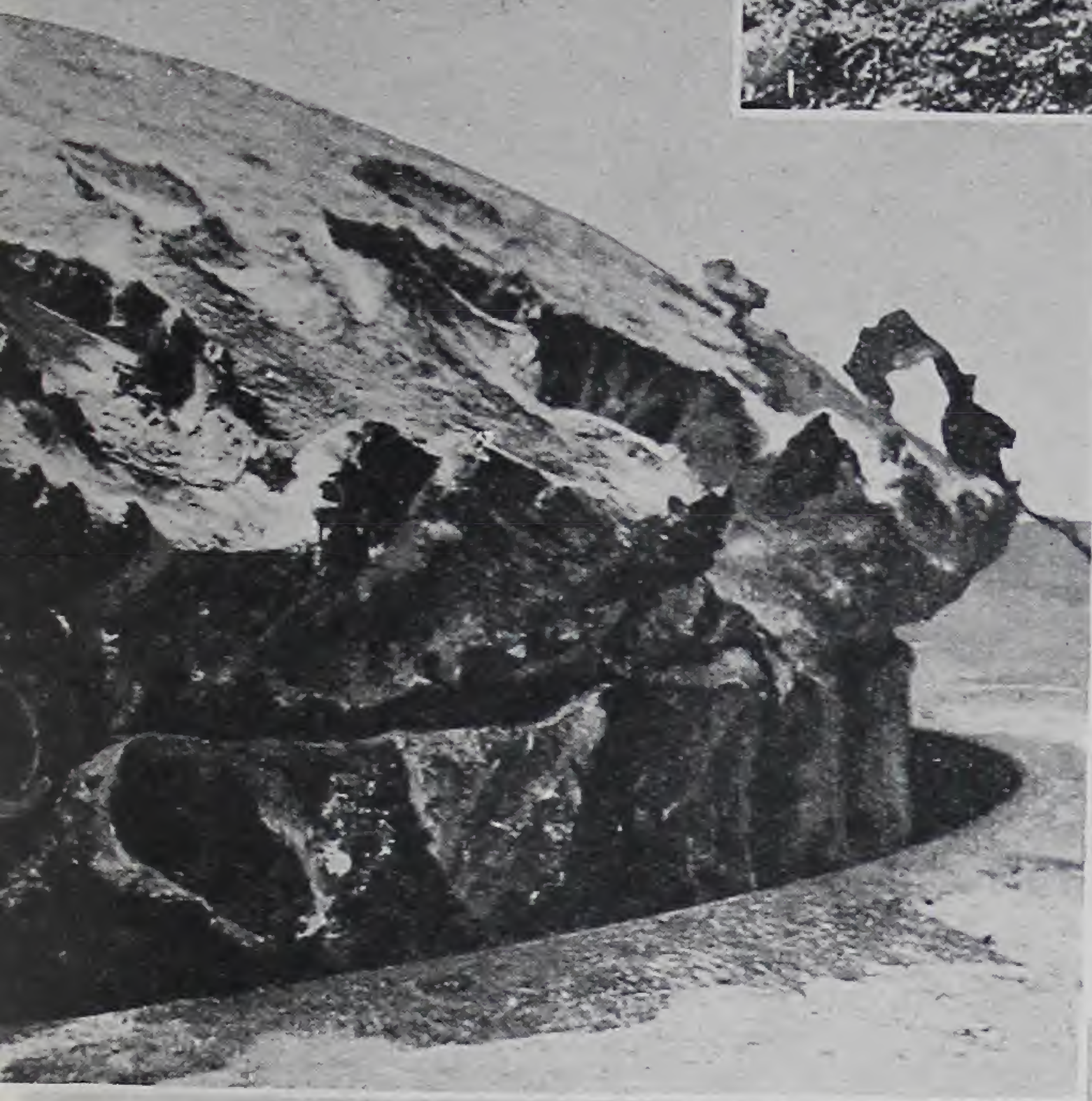
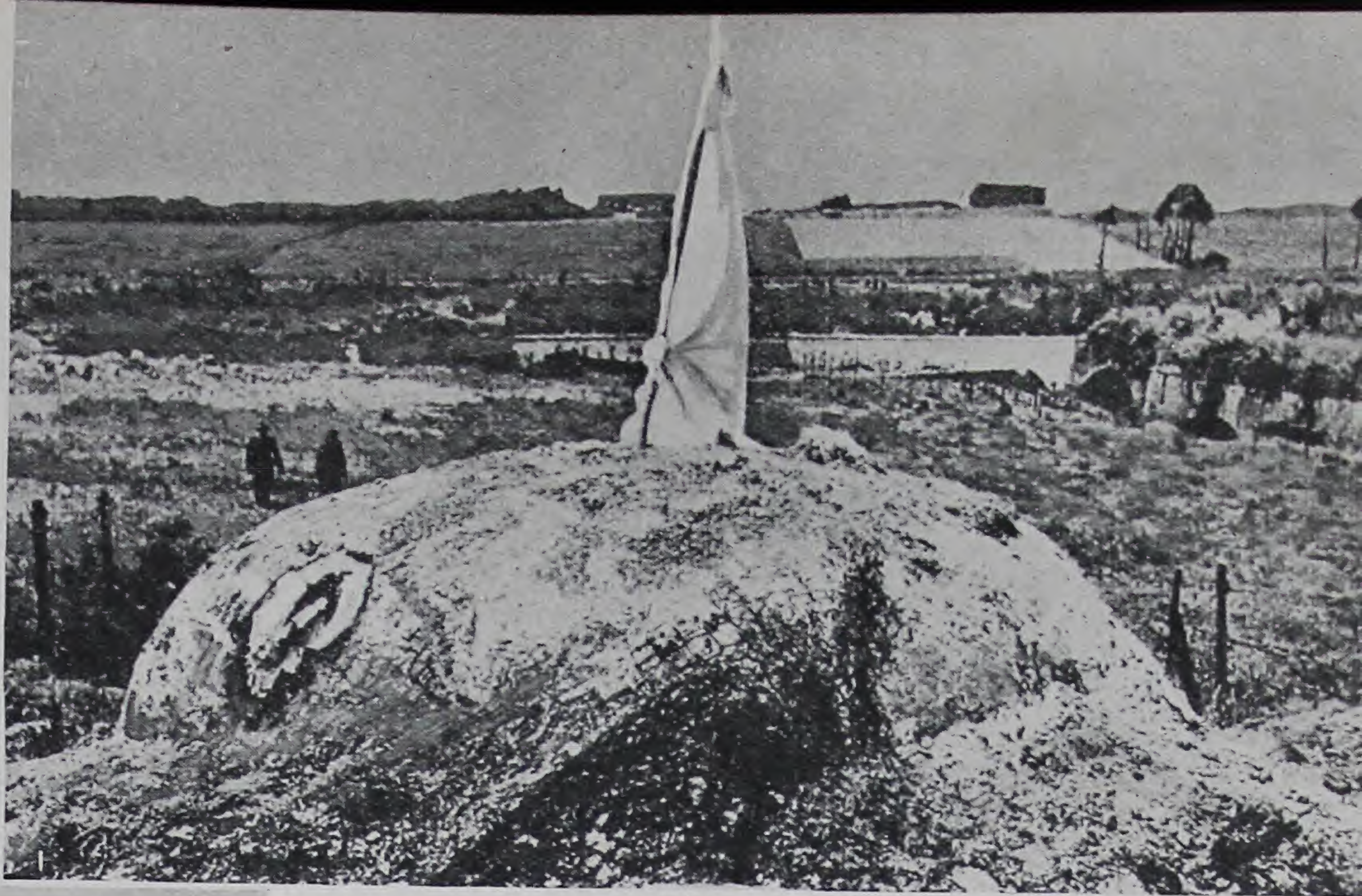
positions were the divisions of the B.E.F., to whom was entrusted in part the defence of Louvain. On that same May 14—the day on which to the south the battle on the Meuse was developing in all its furious intensity, while to the north Holland was bombed and bludgeoned into capitulation—Lord Gort issued an Order of the Day: "We are now on the eve of one of the great moments in the history of our empire," he declared. "The struggle will be hard and long, but we can be confident of final victory."

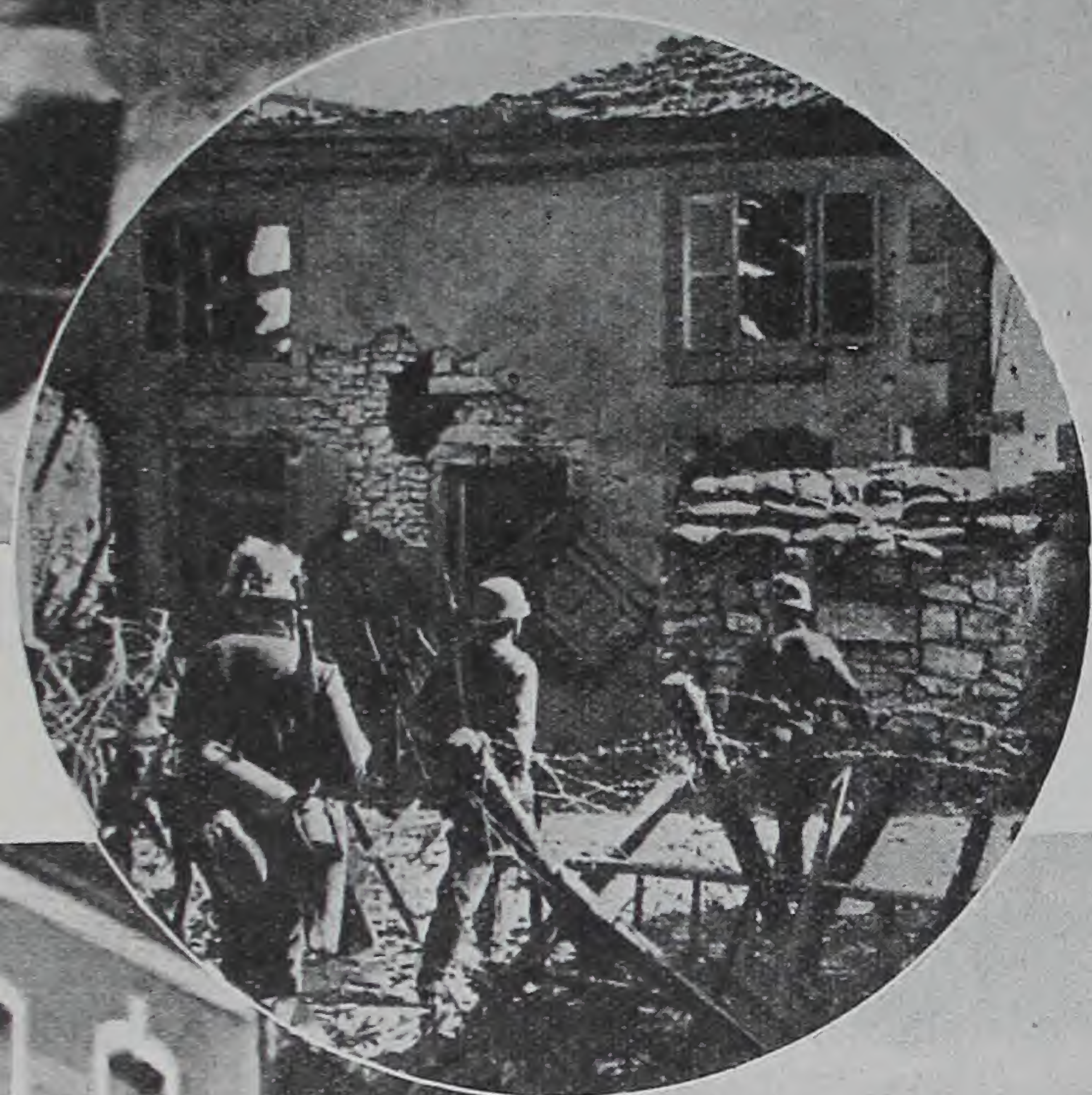
In the late afternoon of May 13 a great hurricane of tanks descended on the French line on the Meuse where the 9th and 2nd Armies held adjoining sectors between Namur and Sedan, and so terrific was the onslaught that it was clear that this was the really determined bid for complete victory. The object was, as Hitler revealed weeks later in his speech to the Reichstag on July 19, the

DRAMATIC COLLAPSE OF EBEN EYMAEL AND MAUBEUGE

The great German drive westward completely shattered the legend of the impregnable land fortress. Eben Eymael, regarded as the most powerful and modern of Liège's defences, was reduced in a few hours by aerial bombardment and mines laid by parachutists. Maubeuge, the famed French stronghold, was similarly assaulted and fell in three days. These German photographs show: 1. The white flag flying over Fort Des Sarts, Maubeuge; 2. Direct artillery hits on an 11-inch cupola at Maubeuge; 3. Storm troops moving to the final attack at Maubeuge; 4. German soldiery in the wrecked confines of Eben Eymael.

Photos from "Die Wehrmacht," Berlin





MAY, 1940—BELGIUM ONCE MORE RAVAGED BY HUNS
 Here are more scenes from the invasion of Belgium. Above, a German 4-inch howitzer is seen in action on a country road. Circle, German troops entering a shattered Belgian farm, where barbed wire entanglements had been hurriedly erected. Below, a German motor-cycle detachment passing through a devastated village.

Photos, Keystone ; Central Press



complete destruction of the Anglo-French armies. "I succeeded," he said, "in deceiving the enemy staffs by inverting the Schlieffen plan"—that plan which, it may be recalled, was essentially a thrust through the northern districts of Belgium past Antwerp and Ghent to France's Channel ports. "In contradiction to the Schlieffen plan of 1914 I arranged for operations to bear mainly on the left wing of the front, though ostensibly retaining the principles of the former plan. It was made easier by the enemy himself, who had concentrated all his motorized troops on the Belgian frontier. I attacked the right flank and succeeded. The operations were not undertaken in the first place with the object of taking Paris, but to break through up to the Seine, and on the left side up to the Swiss frontier. Paris fell. The resistance on the Aisne was broken. The Maginot Line was overrun. . . ."

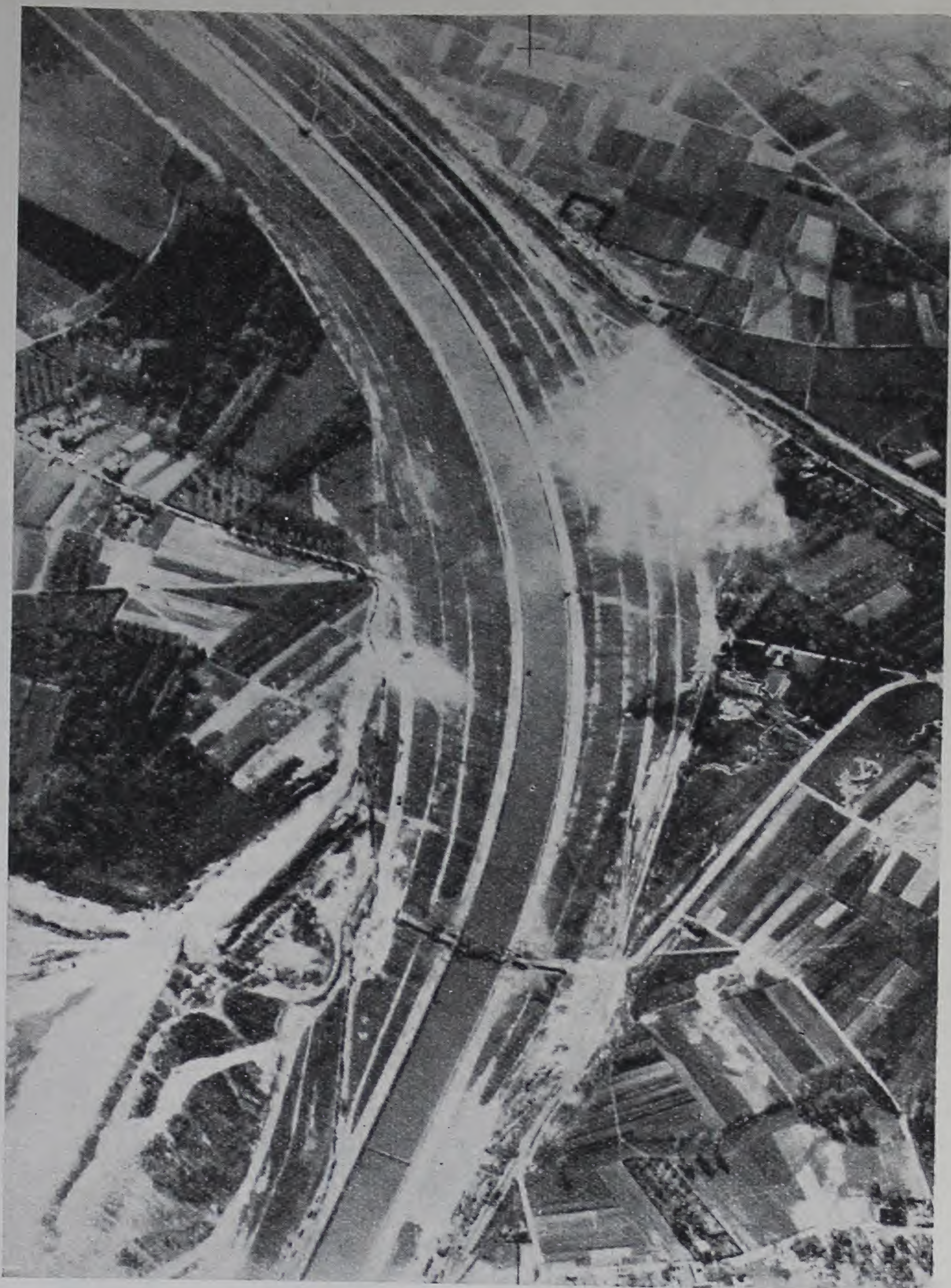
But this is to anticipate. On May 13-15 the French resisted as best they might, but, faced at certain points with

Break-through at Sedan

an overwhelming mass of armoured units, they were obliged to give way. Sedan was cap-

tured about 5 p.m. on the 13th; the German tank columns broke through the French lines, and then, spreading out fanwise in all directions, began what soon developed into a general mêlée, which lasted for days. As a result of what M. Reynaud, the French Premier, described a few days later in the French Senate as "incredible mistakes," the bridges over the Meuse were not destroyed. Over the bridges poured in an endless stream the German mechanized columns under the command of General Guderian—"preceded by . . . aeroplanes which came to attack divisions which were scattered, ill-cadred and badly trained for such attacks." (A later account stated that the Germans crossed the Meuse N. of Dinant in rubber boats and established two bridgeheads for their Panzer columns.) The army opposed to Guderian—General Corap's 9th Army—was not only defeated but shattered; it was said afterwards that the General had been given an impossible task in the holding of a long sector of the front with troops which had already been combed of reserves dispatched north to help the Belgians. Corap was dismissed on the 15th, and to his successor, General Giraud, was given the task of rallying the broken French front. Giraud fell into German hands on May 16.

As the situation deteriorated, forces of British and French bombers launched a combined attack on the crossings of the Meuse and the main lines of the advancing reinforcements—over 150



ONE BRIDGE THAT WAS DESTROYED

This aerial photograph of the Albert Canal shows a new bridge at Locht which was demolished by the Allies to impede the German advance. The Nazis threw over a small pontoon, but the passage of heavy artillery and tanks was successfully hindered.

Photo, British Official : Crown Copyright

Allied aircraft were engaged in this operation—and they succeeded in destroying four bridges, in breaking up a number of tank and troop concentrations, and blocking a number of roads. For a short time the German advance in the Sedan sector was halted, but soon reinforcements were brought up and the hurricane blew again in full force.

Guderian's tactics marked a complete change in the character of the war. The French High Command had anticipated a static war, in which they would be charged with defending their native soil from behind the vast bastion of steel and concrete which had been constructed from Basle to Montmédy, from the

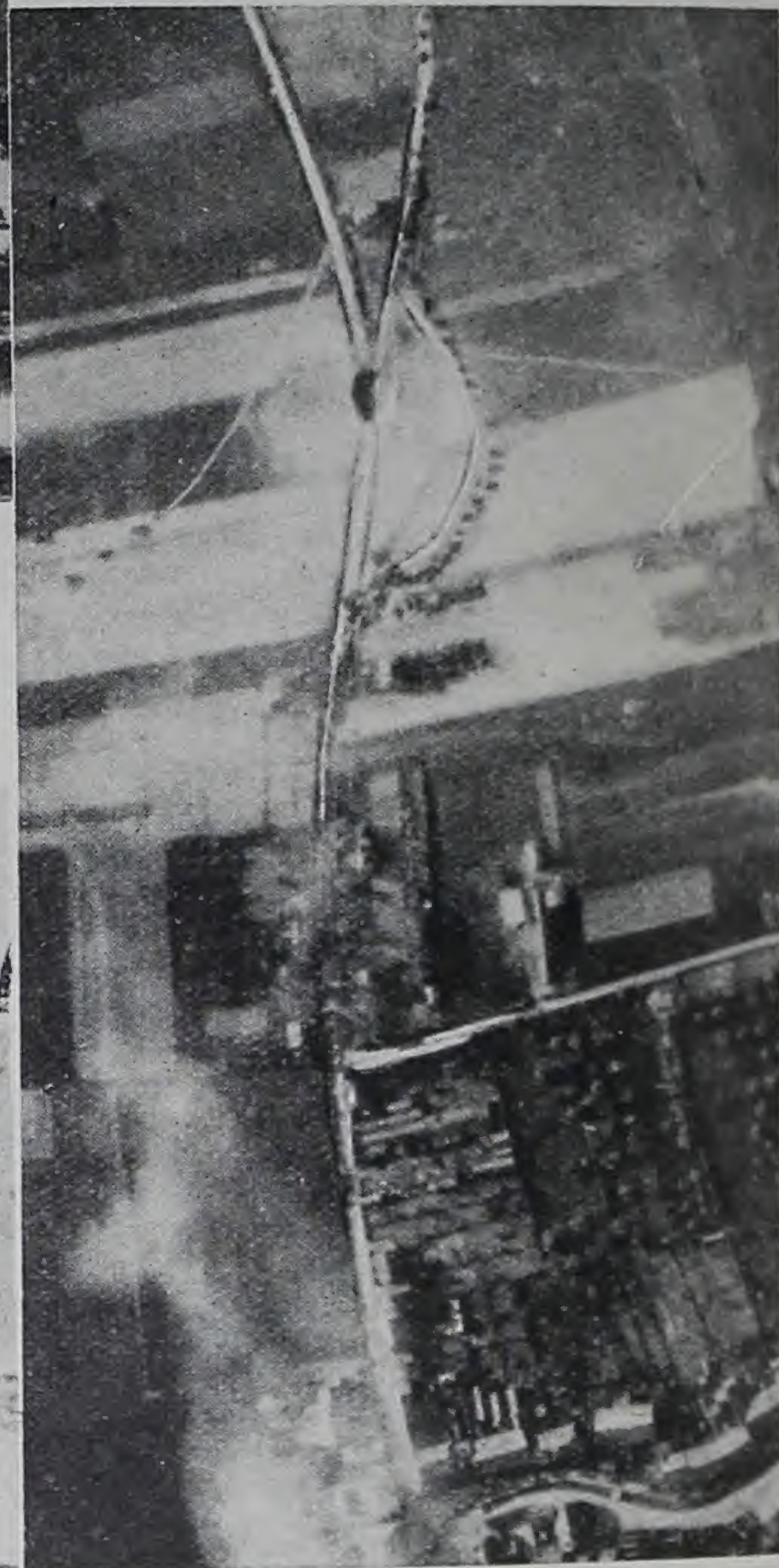
frontier of Switzerland to that of Belgium. Beyond Montmédy to the English Channel the defence line was little more than a series of disconnected concrete pill boxes; but then the French had considered that either Belgian neutrality would not be violated, in which case they would have nothing more to do than to remain on the defensive on the Maginot Line, or, if Belgium were invaded, then the Germans would be held on the line of the Meuse between Namur and Sedan. The extension of the Maginot Line along the Belgian frontier would, they imagined, only come into play if the Belgians gave passage to the Germans without fighting.



SEDAN—TOWN OF ILL OMEN

At Sedan, scene of the colossal French defeat in 1870, the Germans broke through the French defences on May 13-14, 1940. Above, the old fortress of Sedan, and in foreground houses blown up by the retiring French forces. Right, Nazi columns, seen converging on Sedan, have to make a detour outside the village of Floing owing to accurate Allied bombing of the forked crossroads.

Photos, Associated Press ; British Official : Crown Copyright



HE ATTEMPTED AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK

Above, General Giraud is seen on arrival at a German airport. He was captured by the Nazis while vainly trying to reorganize the shattered army of General Corap. During the war of 1914-18 General Giraud was captured by the Germans, but managed then to escape.

Photo, E.N.A.

The break-through on the Meuse confounded their predictions, frustrated their hopes. The war was again a war of movement as it had been in 1914, but now the speed with which it moved was far greater, and so, too, was the devastating power of the enemy's onslaught. The generals did their best to meet the new situation, but it was difficult to think out fresh plans; more difficult still to put them into operation, when the firm front which had been so carefully built up suddenly became fluid, and far behind the zone where French and Germans were engaged in a hand-to-hand struggle the mechanized columns of the enemy reached out like

the tentacles of some vast armoured octopus.

Perhaps the French were right when they claimed that the Maginot Line could never be taken by frontal assault. But the assertion remained unproved, for why should the Germans attack it from the front when it could be outflanked with such ease? So the guns of the Maginot Line continued to point and sometimes to blaze across the Rhine, while the tide of battle left them far behind as it swept across the wooded hills of the Ardennes and the great plain of north-eastern France.

HOLLAND HELPLESS AGAINST FORCE MAJEURE

Hitler's five-day campaign in Holland was destined to succeed, for the Dutch Army, though gallant in spirit, was inadequate in numbers and equipment to withstand the invading Nazi hordes. Below we reprint two royal protests against the outrage, and apologies of the Queen of the Netherlands and her Commander-in-Chief when it was realized that Holland must lay down her arms or perish altogether.

QUEEN WILHELMINA IN A PROCLAMATION TO THE DUTCH PEOPLE, MAY 10, 1940:

AFTER our country, with scrupulous conscientiousness, had observed strict neutrality during all these months, and while Holland had no other plan than to maintain this attitude, Germany last night made a sudden attack on our territory without warning. This was notwithstanding the solemn promise that the neutrality of our country would be respected as long as we ourselves maintained that neutrality.

I herewith make a flaming protest against this unprecedented violation of good faith and violation of all that is decent between cultured States. I and my Government will also do our duty now. Do your duty everywhere and in all circumstances. Everyone to the post to which he is appointed, with the utmost vigilance and with that inner calmness and strong-heartedness which a clear conscience gives.

KING GEORGE IN A MESSAGE TO THE QUEEN OF THE NETHERLANDS, MAY 10, 1940:

I AM profoundly shocked by the news of the brutal and wholly unwarranted German invasion of your Majesty's country. Not only is this action a defiance of international law and of solemn undertakings, but without any pretence of warning the neutrality so strictly observed by the Netherlands since the outbreak of war has been grossly outraged. I wish to express to your Majesty my disgust at this crime and my admiration for the brave resistance which is being made by the people of the Netherlands under your Majesty's leadership. In response to the appeal which my Government has received from your Majesty's Government, the Allies are hastening to the support of your Majesty's forces. I am confident that our cause will prevail, and that the Netherlands, true to their own history, will still remain the home of free men. In this hour of trial and anxiety I wish to convey to your Majesty and to all your people an expression of the sympathy and admiration for your country which is felt by my peoples throughout the world.

GENERAL WINKELMAN, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE DUTCH FORCES, IN A PROCLAMATION BROADCAST ON MAY 14, 1940:

GERMANY has this afternoon bombed Rotterdam. Utrecht was also threatened with destruction. To save the civil population and to prevent further sacrifice of life, I feel justified in ordering the troops concerned to lay down their arms. They are told to exercise control until the arrival of the German regular armies. For this purpose they are to keep their arms. The fight in Zeeland is continuing. I appeal to the population to maintain a serious and dignified attitude at the coming occupation, so as to compel the respect of the Germans. By a vast superiority of the most modern arms the enemy has been able to break our resistance. We have nothing with which to reproach ourselves. We appeal to the Dutch people to remain calm. Ultimately the Netherlands will rise again as a free nation. Long live our Queen!

GENERAL WINKELMAN IN A STATEMENT BROADCAST AT 11 P.M. ON MAY 14, 1940:

WE have laid down our arms because we must. We had decided to defend our Fatherland to the very limit. Today we have reached that limit.

Our soldiers have fought with the courage which will always be beyond compare. In face of the technical methods of the enemy this was not enough. In thousands they have fallen in defence of the liberty of the Netherlands. Our air forces were so reduced that they could no longer support the army. We could not fight against the German superiority in the air. And among the civilian population also numerous victims

have fallen in the air raids. Rotterdam has undergone the sad experience of total war. Utrecht and other cities were threatened the same way. . . . These facts have led me to this very serious decision. We have given up fighting.

We must put our confidence in the indestructible powers which always distinguish our people. Our new lot must be borne with courage and determination. We must have confidence in the future. We must show this in our behaviour. We must set ourselves to reconstruct our damaged country. Long live her Majesty the Queen! Long live the Fatherland!

QUEEN WILHELMINA IN A PROCLAMATION TO THE DUTCH PEOPLE, MAY 14, 1940:

ONCE it had become certain that we and our Ministers could not continue freely to exercise the supreme authority in the Netherlands, the hard but necessary decision had to be taken to transfer abroad the seat of the Government for as long as is unavoidable and with the intention to re-establish ourselves at once in the Netherlands as soon as this would appear at all practicable.

The Government are now in England. They are not prepared, as a Government, to capitulate. Consequently, the territory of the Netherlands remaining in our hands, in Europe as well as in the East and West Indies, continues to be a sovereign State able to assert its place as a full member of the community of States, and in particular in the joint deliberations of the Allies.

The military authorities, and in the last resort the Commander-in-Chief of the Sea and Land Forces, now have to decide what measures it is necessary to take from the military point of view. In those parts of the country where the usurper has now established domination, the local civil authorities should continue to do all they can in the interest of the population, and in the first place help in the maintenance of order.

Our heart goes out towards our compatriots, who in our beloved country will have to pass through hard times. In due course, however, with God's help, the Netherlands will regain their European territory. Remember calamities which occurred in past centuries, and the repeated resurrection of our country. That will take place again. Do not despair. Let all do what it is possible for them to do in the interest of the country. Long live the Netherlands!

QUEEN WILHELMINA IN A BROADCAST TO THE PEOPLES OF GREAT BRITAIN AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE, MAY 15, 1940:

I AND my people have always hoped that it would be possible to limit the extent of the European conflict, and that a reasonable basis for a lasting peace would be established in the near future. Today it appears that all our fervent prayers in favour of common understanding between nations have proved futile. Today we have to admit that no happiness can be expected in this world if those who are solely responsible for the present situation are not definitely checked in their course of unscrupulous destruction and utter disregard of law and the most elementary principles of morality.

After a heroic struggle my nation, that has attempted everything to maintain peace, is being overpowered by sheer superiority of force. But morally we can never be conquered. Our spirit will remain unbroken because our conscience is clear. Notwithstanding the great distress that my people are suffering at the present moment, and the oppression under which they will live until the country is free again, I am convinced that they will never give up their faith in the cause of freedom and justice. I pray God that our allied cause be blessed, and that the dawn of the day when freedom will be restored to the Netherlands and to all other victims of German aggression be near.

TRAGEDY OF THE BELGIAN SURRENDER

It has been suggested that, when all the facts are known and historical perspective achieved, King Leopold's order to his Army to cease fire may prove less an act of perfidy than it appears today. Among our selection from important statements and proclamations on the Belgian invasion we include one by the King himself which makes even more incomprehensible his subsequent betrayal of the Allies.

BARON DE CARTIER DE MARCHIENNE, BELGIAN AMBASSADOR IN LONDON, IN A BROADCAST FROM THE B.B.C., MAY 10, 1940:

NEARLY 26 years ago the Belgian nation, brutally attacked in spite of every promise by a wanton foe, stood up as one man under the leadership of their great King Albert to defend their freedom, their independence and their honour, fully conscious of the fact that they risked total annihilation. After four years of bitter struggle, during which the most cruel hardships were inflicted on a defenceless civil population. Belgium finally, side by side with her glorious Allies, emerged victorious from the fight of justice against evil, and applied herself to the task of rebuilding her battered country.

Today's aggression is, if possible, even more odious. Fundamentally, the crime perpetrated against a peaceful people is the same. This time there is not even the pretence of an ultimatum. We first knew of the attack when bombs began falling early this morning. As for the miserable excuses invented by the leaders of the Third Reich for breaking the most solemn promises made in 1937 and renewed in September last, they will deceive nobody, and they can join the scrapheap of their lies and broken pledges.

Today, thanks to the wise leadership and foresight of King Leopold III, the keystone of whose policy has been to strengthen to the utmost the defences of the country, we face the aggressor with forces ten times as great, and we are fully confident that, with the help of our old allies, we shall see the struggle through to victory. We know full well that our country may once more be destroyed. No people know better than the Belgians the horrors that modern warfare brings to such a small territory and thickly populated country. Thoroughly realizing the perils they are facing, my compatriots are all the more determined to fight with all the strength at their command. The Belgians of 1940, united as their fathers were in 1914, will follow the beloved son of our great King Albert and prove worthy of their elders. God save our country! Long live King Leopold!

KING LEOPOLD OF THE BELGIANS IN A PROCLAMATION TO HIS PEOPLE, MAY 11, 1940:

FOR the second time in a quarter of a century Belgium, loyal and neutral, has been attacked by the German Empire, in spite of most solemn engagements. But the Belgium of 1940 will resist the same as that of 1914. Up to the last moment we had faithfully discharged our duty of neutrality. To the valiant Belgian army and to our courageous soldiers I send my fraternal greetings. They are fighting side by side to stop the enemy in progress right across our frontiers, and to limit the amount of national territory violated by the invader.

Thanks to the effort agreed to by the entire nation, our country is today infinitely stronger than in 1914. France and Great Britain have given us their support, and their first troops are already on their way to meet ours. The struggle will be hard, but no one can doubt its ultimate outcome.

Like my father in 1914, I have placed myself at the head of my troops with the same faith and confidence. The Belgian cause is pure and, with the help of God, will triumph.

M. REYNAUD, FRENCH PREMIER, BROADCASTING AT 8.30 A.M. ON MAY 28, 1940:

IHAVE to inform the French people of a grave event. This event occurred during the night. France can no longer count on the help of the Belgian Army. The French Army and the British Army are now fighting alone against the enemy in the north.

You know what the situation was following the break in our front on May 14. The German Army thrust itself between our Armies, which found themselves cut into two groups—one in the north, the other in the south. In the south are French divisions who hold a new front which

follows the Somme and the Aisne and then joins up with the intact Maginot Line. In the north is a group of three Allied armies, the Belgian Army, the British Expeditionary Force and some French divisions, among which many of us have a dear one. This group of three armies, under the command of General Blanchard, was supplied via Dunkirk. The French and British Armies defended this port in the south and in the west, and the Belgian Army in the north. It is this Belgian Army which, at the height of the battle, has, unconditionally and without warning its British and French comrades-in-arms, suddenly capitulated on the orders of its King and opened the road to Dunkirk to the German divisions.

Eighteen days ago this same King addressed to us an appeal for help. To that appeal we responded, following a plan conceived by the Allied General Staffs last December. Then, in the midst of battle, King Leopold of the Belgians, who until May 10 always affected to attach as much worth to Germany's word as to that of the Allies, King Leopold III, without warning General Blanchard, without one thought, without one word for the British and French soldiers who came to the help of his country on his anguished appeal—King Leopold III of the Belgians laid down his arms. It is a fact without precedent in history . . .

M. PIERLOT, BELGIAN PRIME MINISTER, BROADCASTING FROM PARIS, MAY 28, 1940:

OVERRULING the formal and unanimous advice of the Government, the King has opened separate negotiations and has treated with the enemy. Belgium will be dumbfounded, but the guilt of one man cannot be imputed to the whole nation. Our Army has not deserved the fate which has befallen it.

The act which we deplore is without any legal validity. It does not bind the country. According to the terms of the Belgian Constitution, which the King swore to uphold, all the powers come from the people. They are exercised as laid down by the Constitution. No act of the King can be valid unless it bears the counter-signature of a Minister. The King, breaking the bond which bound him to his people, placed himself under the power of the invader. Henceforth he is no longer in a position to govern, since obviously the functions of the head of the State cannot be carried out under foreign control. . . . The Government . . . is resolved to continue the struggle for the liberation of the country . . .

MR. CHURCHILL, PRIME MINISTER, IN A STATEMENT IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, MAY 28, 1940:

THE House will be aware that the King of the Belgians yesterday sent a plenipotentiary to the German Command asking for a suspension of arms on the Belgian front. The British and French Governments instructed their generals immediately to dissociate themselves from these proceedings and to persevere in the operations on which they were now engaged. However, the German Command has agreed to the Belgian proposals, and the Belgian armies ceased to resist the enemy's will at four o'clock this morning.

I have no intention of suggesting to the House that we should attempt, at this moment, to pass judgement upon the action of the King of the Belgians in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief of the Belgian Army. This Army has fought very bravely, and has both suffered and inflicted heavy losses. The Belgian Government has dissociated itself from the action of the King, and has declared itself to be the only legal Government of Belgium and has formally announced its resolve to continue the war at the side of the Allies who came to the aid of Belgium at her urgent appeal. Whatever our feelings may be over the facts so far as they are known to us, the sense of brotherhood between the many peoples who have fallen under the power of the aggressor and those who still confront him will play its part in better days than those through which we are passing. . . .



ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION THAT WAS CENTRAL ROTTERDAM

History holds no parallel to the coldly calculated mass murder committed by the German Air Force in Rotterdam on Tuesday, May 14, 1940. With devilish thoroughness, two squadrons of 27 bombers each flew back and forth systematically over nearly two square miles of densely populated streets in the centre of the city, and deluged the utterly defenceless citizens with incendiary and 500-kilogram high explosive bombs. So complete was the devastation that only three buildings were left standing—all else was razed to the ground: 50,000 casualties were recorded, and of these the appalling total of 30,000 represented persons killed. Above is what was left of the Tuinderstraat, a once populous thoroughfare in a working-class district.

Photo, Wide World



BRITAIN AND BELGIUM WERE AGAIN ALLIED IN WAR

There was no mistaking the enthusiasm of the Belgian people when the B.E.F. entered their country to join forces with their own hard-pressed army, for Belgium remembered how British troops had assisted her in her former struggle with the invader. Above, Belgian soldiers and civilians unite in greeting lorryloads of smiling British soldiers.

Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright



ONE BRIDGE THE NAZIS COULD NOT USE

The old university city of Louvain, scene of wanton destruction by the Germans in 1914, was again submerged by the tide of war in 1940. Above, a British sapper is seen preparing to blow up a bridge there after the last refugees have left. Below, all that remained of the bridge once the charge had been detonated.

Photos, British Official : Crown Copyright

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WAR-WEARY BELGIAN GUNNERS ON THE ROAD

Though the Belgian army resisted the invader with the utmost gallantry, the German pressure was too powerful for them to withstand and they were compelled to give ground. In the photograph above, weary Belgian artillerymen, many of them asleep on guns and limbers, are seen on a high road in the vicinity of Louvain.

Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright

BATTLE OF THE WEST: (3) THE BRITISH WITHDRAWAL & THE SURRENDER OF BELGIUM

British Withdrawal from Louvain—Gamelin's Order of the Day—Pétain Joins French Cabinet—Weygand Takes Supreme Command—Reynaud's Dramatic Statement—King Leopold Surrenders—Critical Situation of the British Expeditionary Force

(See also the account, based on later information, in Chapter 146)

WHILE the French northern armies were engaged ever more heavily in the wooded Ardennes and on the Meuse, while the German armoured columns plunged through the broken line and roared here and there behind the front creating everywhere a veritable mêlée of destruction and disruption—the British in Belgium still held the positions which they had reached in the first day or two of the great offensive.

On the evening of May 10 their mechanized cavalry detachments had reached and seized the bridges over the Dyle to the north and south of Louvain. On the next day they had cautiously advanced a further ten miles or so, but had then withdrawn on making contact with enemy units in much superior force. This tentative excursion was followed by skirmishes and some fighting in the outskirts of Louvain, while the city—which had suffered so severely in the invasion of 26 years before—was subjected to periodical bombing. On May 15, however, heavy fighting broke out in the neighbourhood when the British troops were attacked by powerful enemy forces all along the line. The Germans made desperate attempts to dislodge the British and heavy fighting developed in the suburbs, while the city was subjected to heavy shelling and dive-bombing.

Following the collapse on the Meuse it was no longer possible to hold the line at Louvain, and shortly before midnight on May 17 the War Office announced that “during the night of May 16–17 certain

Fall of Brussels readjustments to the front have become necessary. The B.E.F. was withdrawn to positions west of Brussels. This readjustment was carried out without interference; there is no question of any collapse or break-through in this sector as suggested by the German communiqué.” The communiqué in question, issued by the German High Command at 9.52 p.m., had declared that “after the collapse of the British and French positions south of Louvain, German troops marched into Brussels late this afternoon.” Somewhat earlier the Ger-

mans claimed they had reached the fortifications of Antwerp, that the line of the Dyle had been broken and both Malines and Louvain occupied.

At this dark hour, on that May 17 when the French armies were broken on the Meuse and the British and Belgians were retreating in the north, General Gamelin issued an Order of the Day: “The fate of our country and that of our Allies, the destinies of the world, depend on the battle now in progress. British, Belgian, Polish soldiers and foreign volunteers are fighting at our side, and the Royal Air Force is taking its full part with our own. Any soldier who cannot advance should allow himself to be killed rather than abandon that part of our national soil which has been entrusted to him. As always in grave hours of our history, the Order of the Day is ‘Conquer or die.’ We must conquer.”

Brave, even noble, words; but something more than words, however brave and noble, was needed to repair the gap left by those “incredible mistakes.”

Falling back from the Meuse, the French were now holding a line in front of the Sambre to the north, from where to Mézières in the Sedan sector there had developed a dangerous bulge. In this bulge extremely heavy fighting was taking place, as, on the one hand, the Germans—who were employing two, and perhaps three, armoured divisions, each consisting of 400 tanks—did their best to widen it, while the French in successive counter-attacks strove to close it.

According to the German account the Maginot Line—in reality, as we have seen, it was but an extension of the Line—had been pierced over a distance of 100 kilometres, the enemy was in full retreat, and 12,000 prisoners and a number of guns had been captured. As for the northern sector, the German flag was now flying over Antwerp town hall, and in all the eastern half of Belgium only some of the forts of Liège and Namur continued their resistance.

Yet in Paris on May 19 there was quite a wave of optimism amongst the



PROVINCES OF CONTENTION

In the provinces of Eupen and Malmédy, which by the Treaty of Versailles were handed over to Belgium by Germany, Nazi troops were in May, 1940, welcomed by members of the National Front, an organization which had long been agitating for the return of these provinces to Germany. Some of them are seen above talking to Nazi soldiers.

Photo, International Graphic Press



GERMAN ARMY COMMANDER

Above is General Von Reichenau, who commanded the German 6th Army in Belgium. During the war of 1914-18 he was on the General Staff of the German Army.

Photo, International Graphic Press

Sunday morning crowds who filled the boulevards. On the Saturday evening M. Reynaud, in a broadcast to the nation, had declared that "the situation is grave, but not at all hopeless. It is in such circumstances as these," went on the Premier. "that the French nation

shows what it is made of," and after announcing that he had called to his side to act as Minister of State and Vice-President the "victor of Verdun," Marshal Pétain, he concluded by saying that every Frenchman, whether he be in the army or at home, must that night join him in taking a solemn oath to win.

Events proved, however, that there was little justification for any feeling of optimism. All through the week-end the battle continued with unabated violence as Germany threw into the fight an enormous weight of men and metal. Not only did the bulge remain unclosed, but its shape became still more pronounced. Continuing their chorus of victory, the German High Command announced on that Sunday night that their troops had crossed the Sambre and the Oise, that Le Cateau and St. Quentin were in their hands, and that the Aisne had been reached at Rethel. "So far we have taken 110,000 prisoners without counting those belonging to the Dutch army." The situation was summed up by the British Prime Minister, Mr. Winston Churchill, in a broadcast message on the same evening—the first broadcast since he became Prime Minister ten days before. "A tre-

mendous battle is raging in France and Flanders," he said. "The Germans by a remarkable combination of air bombing and heavily-armoured tanks have broken through the French defence north of the Maginot Line, and strong columns of their armoured vehicles are ravaging the open country, which for the first day or two was without defenders. They have penetrated deeply and spread alarm and confusion in their track. Behind them there are now pouring infantry in lorries, and behind them again large masses are moving forward." The Premier proceeded to tell of the regroupment of the French armies, and expressed his faith in the French genius for recovery and counter-attack. Yet it would be foolish to disguise the gravity of the hour . . .

Nothing, perhaps, brought home the extent of the German advance so much as the appearance in the communiqués of the *Memories* names of places which of 1914-18 had been prominent in the fighting of the war of 1914-1918. German mechanized units were reported at Landrecies and Le Cateau, names for ever associated with the first B.E.F.; a great German thrust was developing near St. Quentin, and

LITTLE OIL FOR NAZIS HERE

Before the Nazis finally gained possession of the great Belgian port of Antwerp the retreating Allies set fire to the oil tanks on the banks of the Scheldt to prevent the valuable fuel from falling into the hands of the enemy. This photo of the heart of Antwerp shows the blazing oil tanks.

Photo, Central Press





THE CAPITULATION OF BRUSSELS

Top left, the Mayor of Brussels is surrendering the capital to a delegation of Nazi officers. Top right, a German anti-tank detachment entering the city on the morning of May 18, 1940. Left, Nazi pioneer troops clearing a bridge which had been damaged by the retreating Belgians. Below, two Nazi sentries stand guard as the German swastika is unfurled over the city hall of Belgium's capital.

Photos, Central Press ; Associated Press ; Keystone



there were several French counter-attacks in the neighbourhood of Péronne. No longer was it a question of closing a bulge created by the German mechanized columns; now it was clear a great German host, whose vanguard was an armada of warplanes, whose main body was a horde of tanks, and whose rear-guard was composed of countless divisions of sweating infantry, was making what seemed to be irresistible progress across north-eastern France. In Paris it was the general opinion that the French capital was the Germans' objective, but, as Hitler himself has told us, not Paris but the destruction of the Allied armies was his aim. Hence the

determined effort to cut them off from the coast. Before the German onset the Allies—for the French had now been reinforced by such British troops, tanks and 'planes as could be spared and brought back from the northern sector—retreated from point to point, rather than from line to line. On the northern flank the British and Belgians were forced to keep step in the general retirement; only on the extreme right did the French line remain intact where it hinged near Montmédy on the first of the forts of the Maginot Line proper.

So grave had the situation become that the French Government, acting in consultation with its Allies in London,

decided upon the drastic step of a change in the Supreme Command. On that same Sunday evening (May 19) it was announced in Paris that the President of the Republic had just signed a decree by which General Weygand was appointed Chief of the General Staff for National Defence and Commander-in-Chief in all the theatres of operations. General Weygand had arrived in Paris that day, having flown from Syria, where hitherto he had held the post of Allied Commander-in-Chief in the Near East. The appointment gave new heart to the Allies, for although Weygand was several years older than Gamelin, the man he replaced, he had been closely



GENERAL BILLOTTE

General Billotte, who commanded the 1st French Army Group, was in charge of liaison between the French, British and Belgian armies in Flanders. After a conference of Allied commanders at Ypres on May 22 he was killed in a motor accident.

Photo, Topical

associated with Marshal Foch in the closing months of the Great War, and to him also was generally ascribed the honour of defeating the Bolsheviks when they were at the very gates of Warsaw in 1920. His achievement had then been described as the "miracle of Warsaw"; now it was France which was in need of a miracle, and, such is the magic that attaches to great names, it was confidently believed that this 73-year-old general was the man who would work it. He himself, however (it came out later), was not so sure . . .

Certainly the next day observers professed to discern a break in the clouds that hovered so ominously above the battlefield in Flanders. There were indications that the Nazi drive towards Cambrai was slowing down; the German soldiers, it was said, were fatigued after ten days of desperate fighting, and the problem of supplying the German motorized columns which had pushed ahead of the main front was becoming ever more difficult. Moreover, several French counter-attacks were reported, and the air arm of the Allies had delivered innumerable attacks on the German columns. But only the most purblind optimists maintained that the

situation was well in hand. None could speak with any certainty, indeed, of a battle or series of battles in which vast numbers of swiftly-moving machines moved here and there across the northern plain. On both sides the forces engaged were principally tank divisions; and in military circles in Paris it was confidently stated that the German infantry had not yet been engaged, and that when they entered upon the chaotic battlefield they would meet with strong resistance from the main forces of the French, which also, up to now, had hardly fired a shot.

But on May 21 the German drive, so far from slackening, was seen to have been intensified. "The greatest offen-

So bad was the news that in Paris men tried to convince themselves that it was too bad to be true. The German claims, it was argued, were premature; Arras and Amiens could not have been occupied by the Germans in strength, but had been merely raided by flying columns; it yet remained for the enemy to consolidate the gains which he had achieved. In London, too, Mr. Duff Cooper, the Minister of Information, in a broadcast said that the news was grave but there was no cause for serious alarm, as the "armies of Britain and France are undefeated. In enormously superior numbers they occupy the battlefield, and the counter-attack when it comes should prove formidable."

But there was little that was cheering in M. Reynaud's statement to the Senate on May 21. "The country is in danger," he said; and he went on to tell that the Meuse had been wrongly considered a redoubtable obstacle for the enemy; that the bridges over the river had not been destroyed. "as the result of incredible mistakes which will be punished"; that a breach of about 100 kilometres, or 60 miles, had been opened in the Allied front through which poured the German army, thus taking in



GENERAL WEYGAND

After the French débâcle General Gamelin, the French commander-in-chief, was superseded by General Weygand, previously commanding the French forces in the Levant. Above, General Weygand is seen leaving the casemate of one of the forts at Dunkirk.

Photo, Keystone

sive operation of all time is now having its first operational success after individual tactical successes," declared a communiqué dated from the Fuehrer's headquarters. The Ninth French Army, which held the line between the Allies in Belgium and the Maginot Line, had been defeated and scattered, and now "German divisions are pouring into the breaches made by the German attack. At their head tank corps and motorized troops have taken Arras, Amiens, and Abbeville. All enemy—French, British and Belgian—armies north of the Somme have thus been driven back on to the Channel coast."



MARSHAL PÉTAIN

After the Germans had broken through the French defences many changes were made in the French Cabinet, and Marshal Pétain (above), was appointed Vice-Premier.

Photo, Sport & General

the rear the entire fortified system along the Franco-Belgium frontier and severing the Allied forces which had been engaged in Belgium until the evening of May 15, when they had received the order to retreat. Arras and Amiens had been occupied by the enemy. "But," the Premier went on, "General Weygand took command yesterday; he is today on the battlefield. The conduct of military operations falls to him alone . . . we have confidence in the great leader who has taken over the command of our armies."

In the fighting on the next day—Wednesday, May 22—the British Expeditionary Force was heavily engaged between Cambrai and

The Gap Widens Arras, while the Belgians on the Scheldt were also severely tested. But the

bulge which had begun on the Meuse had now moved with terrifying speed, and a great German wedge had been driven in between the Anglo-Franco-Belgian army roughly holding the line on Ghent, Valenciennes, Douai and Arras, and the French who were now entrenching themselves on the Somme and the Aisne. Obviously it was of supreme importance



NOTHING STEMMED THE NAZI FLOOD

Liège put up a gallant resistance to the invader, but the German thrust was too powerful. Above, Nazi troops are passing through the Place St. Lambert at Liège. Below, German soldiers are dismantling obstructions which the Belgians had erected across roads.

Photos, Associated Press ; International Graphic Press



plan on May 23, and it was decided that the attack should be launched on May 26, as this was the earliest date on which the two British divisions selected—the 50th and the 5th—could be ready, as they had only a few hours before been heavily engaged at Arras and on the Scarpe in an attempt to close the gap—without the French support which had been promised. The French for their part would have preferred May 25, since they were planning to use three divisions which had had six days in which to reorganize since they were last in action. Sunday, May 26, was, then, the day selected for the launching of the attack which, it was fervently hoped, would close the fatal gap. But the gap was to remain unclosed.

On May 25, attacking with fresh fury, the Germans overwhelmed the Belgian line and crossed the Scheldt near Oudenarde. Swiftly the Belgians were pushed back through and beyond Courtrai, northwards towards Bruges; and soon it was only too clear that their line was about to give. Lord Gort, Commander-in-Chief of the B.E.F., had to make a momentous decision, and in the circumstances it was inevitable that so far from employing his two reserve divisions in an attack towards the south, he should dispatch them immediately to bolster up the Belgians to the north. If he had failed to do so, another gap would have

Gort's Bold Decision

to close the gap, now some 30 miles wide, stretching between the two sections of the Allied armies, and on that same day there was a meeting of the Allied chiefs at Ypres at which General Weygand's plan for closing the gap was disclosed. In brief, it was intended that the French should attack northwards from the south from the direction of Roye, while

the first French army and the B.E.F. should at the same time attack from the neighbourhood of Douai and Valenciennes. After the gap had been closed and communication re-established between the Allies in Belgium and north of the Somme, then the German spearhead of armoured columns would be tackled. The British Government approved the



THE FUEHRER STUDIES HIS CONQUESTS

The photograph above, issued by the German propaganda service, shows Hitler during a visit to the Western Front studying a map with General Keitel, Chief of Staff of the German Army. The German blitzkrieg plans were successful as regards France and the Low Countries, but the price paid was undoubtedly heavy.

Photo, Planet News

developed—this time between the Belgians and the British—and the way of retreat of the B.E.F. to Dunkirk would have been cut off, and it would have fallen into the trap which Hitler and the Nazi High Command had laid for it. Indeed, on the afternoon of May 25 the Germans announced that the ring round the Belgian army, parts of the First, Seventh and Ninth French Armies, and the bulk of the B.E.F., was now definitely closed. Ghent and Courtrai had been captured and the Lys crossed; Vimy Ridge had been overrun; Douai was surrounded; Boulogne had been taken after a grim fight; Calais was hemmed in; all the Belgian and French Channel ports were being successfully bombed.

German pressure in Belgium was intensified on May 26 as the Belgians made a last stand behind the little

River Lys; Ypres, Poperinghe, Passchendaele and the Salient, which had cost the lives

of so many tens of thousands of sons of Britain in the last war, were now once again in the very centre of the battle. Attacking with artillery, hordes of aircraft and hosts of tanks, the Germans suffered enormous losses, but no losses, however terrific, stayed their advance. Hour by hour the Allies were forced back across the flat fields with their network of dykes, canals and streams, their lines of willows and poplars. Soon the Germans were reported to be in St. Omer,

while others moved eastwards along the coast from Calais, and yet others endeavoured to envelop the French troops making a gallant stand in Lille. Mean-

while, their air force continued its merciless bombing of Zeebrugge, Ostend, Dunkirk, and the neighbouring towns and villages of the coastal plain. The Belgian army was still in being; "in spite of the many and hard struggles which have been fought during the past two weeks," read the Belgian communiqué issued at 7 o'clock that evening, "and in spite of the difficult conditions under which our troops had to take up new positions, our forces have maintained their strength and morale."

On that day and the next (Monday, May 27), the Belgians and British bore the brunt of the Nazi onslaught. Masses of infantry were hurled against the Belgian lines; their artillery fire, too, was most violent and the air above was filled with their fighters and dive bombers. Menin was the centre of the struggle, but on either side and, indeed, far to the southwest and along the French front from the Somme to the beginning of the Maginot Line proper, the battle raged with unexampled and undiminished fury. Writers in the Paris press were optimistic, putting their faith wholeheartedly in General Weygand; but those who were not so far removed from the battlefield realized that the situation could hardly be called other than critical.

**Situation
Becomes
Critical**



FRENCH ARREST TWO SPIES

Fifth column activities were among the factors which led to the defeat of France, for spies and enemy agents were very active behind the lines. Above, two civilians suspected of spying are being marched by French soldiers through the cobbled streets of a small town on their way to interrogation by the military authorities.

Photo, Keystone



HEARTBREAK TREK OF BELGIAN REFUGEES

After a quarter of a century of uneasy peace the people of Belgium were forced once again to flee from the German invader. Our photographs show : 1, A homeless Belgian mother with her child ; 2, an elderly couple at a refugee depot ; 3, a little Belgian girl asleep with exhaustion over her father's shoulder ; 4, nuns and young girls fleeing from the ruthless invader ; 5, embarked in a trawler, these refugees seek safety in Britain.

Photos, British Official : Crown Copyright ; Wide World ; Planet News ; " Daily Mirror "





TREES FORM EMERGENCY BARRICADE

So swift was the German advance through Northern France that unprotected areas, thought to be far from any field of battle, were soon in the centre of hostilities. Improvised barricades had to be hastily erected, and, above, trees have been felled across a road to delay, if only for a little, the relentless advance of the Nazi mechanized columns.

Photo, Associated Press

In particular, the British were in a difficult situation, with the Belgian line disintegrating on their left and only a few miles separating them from the handful of Channel

ports that had not yet been captured by the Nazi columns. At 7 p.m. Lord Gort's communiqué read: "Today the enemy violently attacked the French and Belgian forces on the flanks of the British Expeditionary Force. British infantry counter-attacked successfully in cooperation with French tanks. In Belgium, British forces fought side by side with the Belgian Army, meeting attacks of strong enemy forces. The British front remains intact."

Then on May 28 came the crowning disaster. At 4 a.m. that day the Belgian army was ordered by King Leopold to lay down its arms. (His final proclama-

tion to his troops is printed in page 1536.) Harsh words were uttered about this surrender: "The Belgian army," said M. Reynaud in a broadcast to the French people a few hours later, "at the height of the battle has unconditionally, and without warning its British and French comrades in arms, suddenly capitulated on the orders of its King, and opened the road to Dunkirk to the German divisions." Eighteen days ago, continued the Premier, King Leopold had addressed to them an appeal for help, to which they at once responded. "Then, without one thought, without one word for the British and French soldiers who came to the help of his country on his anguished appeal, King Leopold III of the Belgians laid down his arms. It is a fact without precedent in history."

The Belgian Government, which had already left the country, dissociated

itself from the action of its King, and many Belgian soldiers continued to fight in France; but in Belgium itself the "cease fire" was obeyed and 300,000 men laid down their arms.

As a result of the Belgian capitulation the French and British in the north were left in grave peril. At one blow their left flank had collapsed and they were now facing the imminent risk of being completely surrounded.

In Britain, Mr. Churchill asked that judgement should be suspended upon King Leopold's action, and he paid a tribute to the Belgian Army, which had fought very bravely and had both suffered and inflicted heavy losses. The surrender of the Belgians, he went on, added appreciably to the grievous peril in which the British and French Armies now found themselves. Their position, engaged as they were in a most severe battle and beset on three sides and from the air, was evidently extremely grave. Nevertheless, he declared, "the troops are in good heart and are fighting with the utmost discipline and tenacity."



BELGIAN ARMY'S HUMILIATION

On May 28, 1940, the King of the Belgians ordered his troops to lay down their arms. Above, the car carrying the German intermediary is seen approaching the Belgian headquarters to negotiate details of the Belgian surrender. Left, Belgian soldiers marching to the assembly stations for surrender. Below, a street strewn with abandoned equipment.

Photos, Wide World ; Associated Press



BRITAIN COMES TO THE AID OF BELGIUM: THE OPERATIONS AROUND LOUVAIN

*British Divisions in Position Near Louvain—Mr. E. A. Montague's Narrative
—In the Forward Line—German Dive-bombers Attack—Shelling of Louvain—
The Line of the River Dyle—Our Heavy Batteries in Action—British Line
Turned—Withdrawal to the Escaut—Story of the Grenadiers*

ENTERING Belgium at daybreak on May 10, the motorized units of the B.E.F. sped along the cobbled, poplar-lined highways that stretched away into the distance across the Flanders plain. By the end of the day the most advanced of them had reached the neighbourhood of Louvain, and there they took up their positions while the main body of the army drew ever nearer on its march. They could hear in the distance the roar of the battle in which the Belgians were engaged with the invaders not far within the frontier, but as yet the only hostile activity they encountered was when the mechanized patrols clashed in the open country some miles ahead or when an occasional Nazi 'plane dive-bombed on the slowly-assembling men in khaki.

By May 14 the British divisions were in position. Material was still coming up, but the main part of the advance had been completed in spite of the enemy's aerial activity and, still more, of the straggling masses of refugees who were moving slowly back along the roads they had come by.

The British line followed the course of the River Dyle, and its centre was in the old city of Louvain—hardly recovered from its wounds of the last war, and now about to be wounded afresh. Practically all the civilians had been evacuated, and the town was

empty save for British and Belgian troops who were ensconced in shallow pits, half pit and half breastwork, which they had made in the pavements by uprooting the paving-stones and piling up stones and earth in little heaps. "In front of the Town Hall," wrote Mr. E. A. Montague, Special Correspondent of the "Manchester Guardian," "a Belgian and a British officer marshalled the last of the refugees and put the frailest of them into two civilian cars, the last remaining in the town. Above them the Belgian flag still flew on the Town Hall.

"When the pitiful little party had moved away, a silence that was deep and heavy with expectancy fell on the town. The crash of guns near at hand, the drone of 'planes, and the harsh rattling of transport trucks broke it for a moment, and then were swallowed up again. Sappers lay quietly on mattresses taken from deserted houses and spread on the pavement, conserving their strength for the work of demolition to come.

"The men in the pavement pits did not speak . . . the stillness seemed to compel them. Somewhere out in the

country beyond the bridge the German tanks were nosing their way cautiously towards the hidden defences. In silence the front waited."

The next morning Mr. Montague left his car in the support line and walked forward through the fields, past glass-houses which still preserved their glass, through standing corn which would never

**British
Front
Line**

be harvested, and a hamlet in which a photograph of a girl had fallen from a refugees' farm cart and lay face downwards in the dust. Almost the only sound was the lowing of abandoned cows, imploring somebody to milk them.

"We reached our most forward positions almost before we had realized it," wrote Mr. Montague, who soon discovered that, though there were few soldiers in sight, there were plenty lying near by in close concealment, hidden from the German guns which were periodically spraying the area in an experimental way.

"Our own guns were replying, and the singing whine of British and German shells crossing each other made an arc

B.E.F. MOVES INTO BELGIUM

At daybreak on May 10, 1940, motorized units of the B.E.F. sped along the cobbled roads of Flanders into the heart of Belgium. Below, British motor-cyclists passing over the level crossing of a Belgian frontier town. A motorized detachment of the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers was among the first British troops to cross into Belgium.

Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright

Y3



of sound above the little River Dyle, which at this point runs between the two armies. Shells pitched and exploded among the trees or on the open hillsides and smoke drifted up over the crests, but it was difficult to get any clear picture of what was happening. In fact both sides were still exploring and fumbling for a grip."

Some way back the first of the few British casualties were being treated at an advanced dressing station, and men, tired after days of marching and periods

of duty in the line, were sleeping in their billets. Behind the line Refugees were still straggling away towards the rear, walking behind wagons drawn by horses or oxen, piled high with their belongings. Occasionally a stray civilian was brought into Company Headquarters, there to be closely examined, for already the British had learned to beware of German parachutists in civilian dress who might be dropped behind their lines.

Later in the day the British troops were heavily engaged along the whole of their front. Wave after wave of German 'planes swept over the battlefield, dive-bombing on the troops in their trenches, on the gun positions and the machine-gun posts, and doing their utmost to render the roads behind the line impassable. At times the German aircraft flew so low that their iron cross markings were plainly visible, but they paid a high price for their temerity when British anti-aircraft

batteries found them an easy target. The weather, sunny and clear and warm, was ideal for air activity; and the British 'planes, too, worked unceasingly, striving to protect the troops on the ground and to drive off the swarms of Heinkels and Junkers which appeared from everywhere.

"Columns of blue smoke rose into the bright blue sky," wrote Mr. Douglas Williams, War Correspondent of the "Daily Telegraph," who was an eyewitness of the battle, "and the smell of burning fills the nostrils. Wooden houses burn like tinder in many villages. Flames started by incendiary bombs spread rapidly. Many inhabitants, terrified by the bursting of bombs, are unable to make any attempt to check them." He went on to tell of the pitiful sights he had seen in the villages just behind the line—of smashed furniture with burning bedding gaping through the splintered windows, of ruined houses, of long streams of refugees following the roads, struggling along on foot or on bicycles, all hurrying away from the scenes of terror that lay behind them. Then, turning his eyes to the east, he watched a fierce artillery duel between British and German batteries. Bursting shells echoed down the valley, and the wood on the farther rise was burning furiously. A village in the middle distance was being heavily shelled and already several direct hits had been registered on the church.

Louvain was in the very forefront of the battle. In the afternoon it was



MAP REFERENCE

①	Approx. German Line May 13	⑥	Approx. German Line May 25
②	" " " " 15	⑦	" " " " 28
③	" " " " 17	⑧	" " " " 29
④	" " " " 19	⑨	" " " " 30
⑤	" " " " 20	⑩	" " " " 31
⑪ Approx. Allied Line May 26			

heavily shelled—not the first nor the last of many similar bombardments.

"When I visited it a couple of days ago," wrote Mr. Douglas Williams, "it was already almost deserted. Its railway station had been bombed, and houses near the University had been destroyed. The bulk of the city's civilian population had been already evacuated. The University was still standing complete in all its grandeur, its walls still inscribed with the names of American universities and schools which contributed to its rebuilding. By nightfall or tomorrow . . . this magnificent edifice may once again be in ruins."



FIRST V.C.s FOR THE ARMY

On the left is 2nd Lieut. R. W. Annand, Durham Light Infantry, who gained his decoration for displaying most conspicuous gallantry when in command of his platoon on May 13-16, 1940. Though wounded, he repeatedly attacked the enemy single-handed while defending a blown bridge over the River Dyle. Company Sergt.-Major Gristock, Royal Norfolk Regt., whose V.C. was given posthumously, put an enemy machine-gun position out of action despite severe wounds when his company was holding the line of the River Escaut, south of Tournai, on May 21. The story of Lance-Corporal Nicholls' heroic deed is related in this chapter.

Photos, British Official : Crown Copyright ; Sport & General ; Associated Press



THE FIGHTING WITHDRAWAL TO DUNKIRK

This map shows the successive stages of the German advance from May 13, 1940, to May 26 (see reference in p. 874 for details). The lines in white refer to the actions fought by the Grenadier Guards during the advance into and withdrawal from Belgium. (See also colour maps, pp. 1538-9.)

Relief map specially drawn for THE SECOND GREAT WAR by Félix Gardon

Attacking in force, the Germans captured the station and two other points on the outskirts of Louvain, but during the night the British delivered a powerful counter-attack which drove out the Germans from the places they had secured. All through the next day (May 16) sharp fighting and house-to-house sniping went on in the suburbs and on the western side of the city near the Dyle; and all day, too, the city, particularly its western fringes, was subjected to heavy shelling by the Germans.

"From a ridge two miles from and overlooking the city," wrote Mr. Douglas Williams, "I watched the scene of the battle. I could see clouds of smoke drifting upwards, while the whole countryside was

Smoke tainted with the acrid
of Battle smell of tobacco from
a factory which had
been burning for two days. The German heavy explosive shells of considerable size and occasional rounds of shrapnel burst at regular intervals in the valley some 300 or 400 yards away between us and the city."

While the battle was still going on he encountered a party of Poor Clare nuns who were being carried from the city in a British army lorry. They were among the last of the civilians to be evacuated, and one of their number, Sister Marie Claire, told him that their community had suffered the "most terrible nights" since the Friday before (May 10). Shells and bombs, she said,

had fallen constantly in and around the city. Several of the older sisters, including the aged Mother Superior, had had to be left behind in the city as they were unable to travel. "Where will you go to now?" Douglas Williams asked the little party, who appeared already worn and travel-stained. "We don't know," they replied, "we hope someone will take us in. We have no plans. All we wanted was to get away from the city." And she glanced back apprehensively to where a British battery hidden in a wood was banging away at the Germans.

Yet the countryside was strangely somnolent, as we may see from this little word picture.

"Sheep still grazed in the pasture," wrote Mr. Williams; "hens ran about the courtyard; fruit and vegetables were growing in profusion in the garden. A child's swing hung from an old tree. On the tennis courts a couple of rackets lay where they had been flung after the last game played only a few days ago. In another farmhouse near a British battalion everything stood as the owners had left it. Food was on the table; the beds were unmade; the watch-dog waited in his kennel for his master to return; a little pet canary, released from its cage, hopped forlornly in the yard. Pigs still rooted in the sty, and outside

the farm-gate cows swollen with milk mooded unhappily."

But the roads, at least, were filled with movement as along them in the direction of Brussels continued the unending stream of refugees. "Some trundled cumbersome packages loaded on bicycles; others had their possessions rolled in red blankets and slung around their necks. Children rode on the handle-bars or back seats of motorcycles. Others pick-a-backed on their brother's or father's shoulders. In every field along the road as I drove by at six in the morning, groups of these unhappy people were sleeping or washing, dressing or cooking impromptu meals. Their horses cropped the grass beside them. As we approached the forward areas of the enemy's positions traffic became less and less, and the long, empty roads had a sinister quiet in the hot sunshine. Houses were all shuttered and deserted; fields empty of farmers."

At one point he came across the colonel of a London regiment sitting in a wheatfield giving a lecture to a little group of his men on the conditions of the particular area that they were occupying. For half an hour our correspondent sat there watching the eager faces of the young soldiers who listened with keen interest to their colonel, ignoring shells bursting a thousand yards away.



BRITAIN'S YOUTH ON BELGIAN ROADS ONCE MORE

In the photograph above young British soldiers are driving a motor-truck along Belgian roads where their fathers might have driven horse-drawn G.S. wagons a quarter of a century before. Below, a file of British soldiers marches up towards the battle-line, passing Belgian refugees.

Photos. British Official: Crown Copyright; Keystone



After a hard day's fighting the nine divisions of the B.E.F. still occupied the line of the Dyle and the ridges behind. At one or two places the Germans had managed to cross the river in some force, but by nightfall they had all been driven back as the result of a counter-attack in which men of a North Country regiment particularly distinguished themselves. In the fighting in Louvain itself exceptionally good work was done by an Irish regiment and a battalion of the Grenadier Guards, who were heavily engaged with enemy patrols near the station and along the railway to the north. The Grenadiers also succeeded in restoring the line on May 15, when the Germans crossed the canal and established a machine-gun post; this was engaged and destroyed by mortars.

Throughout the three days' battle the Royal Artillery was heavily engaged. One incident may be quoted, when the howitzers and guns of a heavy regiment were presented with a target that might truly be described as a **A Gunner's Dream** gunner's dream. From a heavy battery observation-post hidden among wooded slopes on the Dyle's west bank a sharp look-out was kept over the country on the other side. In the valley below there was desultory machine-gun and mortar fire, and a hillside to all appearances empty and lifeless beyond the town of Wavre was shelled occasionally by the German guns. Then one of the look-outs noticed a small cloud of dust rising from a fold in the cornfields, and a quick glance at the map revealed that there was a valley along which ran a farm track through a wood overlooking the town.

Something was going on in that valley where the puff of dust had been spotted; something worth shooting at was evidently about to use the wood as a hidden assembly place. Orders were given, and two batteries of heavy howitzers were ranged on to a convenient point some considerable distance from the wood. Meanwhile, down the sunken road a continuous stream of tanks and lorries flowed on until well over a hundred were gathered in the imagined security of the wood. When fire was opened the Germans were taken completely by surprise. A second salvo of eight shells arrived before the first of the enemy were to be seen leaving their hiding place. The Battery Commander had time to drop another round of gunfire into the concentration before the target became too dispersed to be worth further expenditure of ammunition.

By May 17 the German thrust through the French armies to the south

had turned the line of the Dyle, and the B.E.F., though unbroken in action and quite capable of continuing its resistance on the line which had been chosen, was compelled to withdraw as part of the Allied strategical plan. The German High Command on May 17 announced that their troops had broken through the Allied positions on the Dyle, while Louvain itself was in their hands after an encircling attack; a few hours later, too, they captured Brussels. Meanwhile, the B.E.F. was making an orderly withdrawal—first to the Senne and then to the Dendre.

Here, on May 18, three battalions of Grenadier Guards, "X," "Y," and "Z," found themselves side by side. Presently a German patrol of motor-

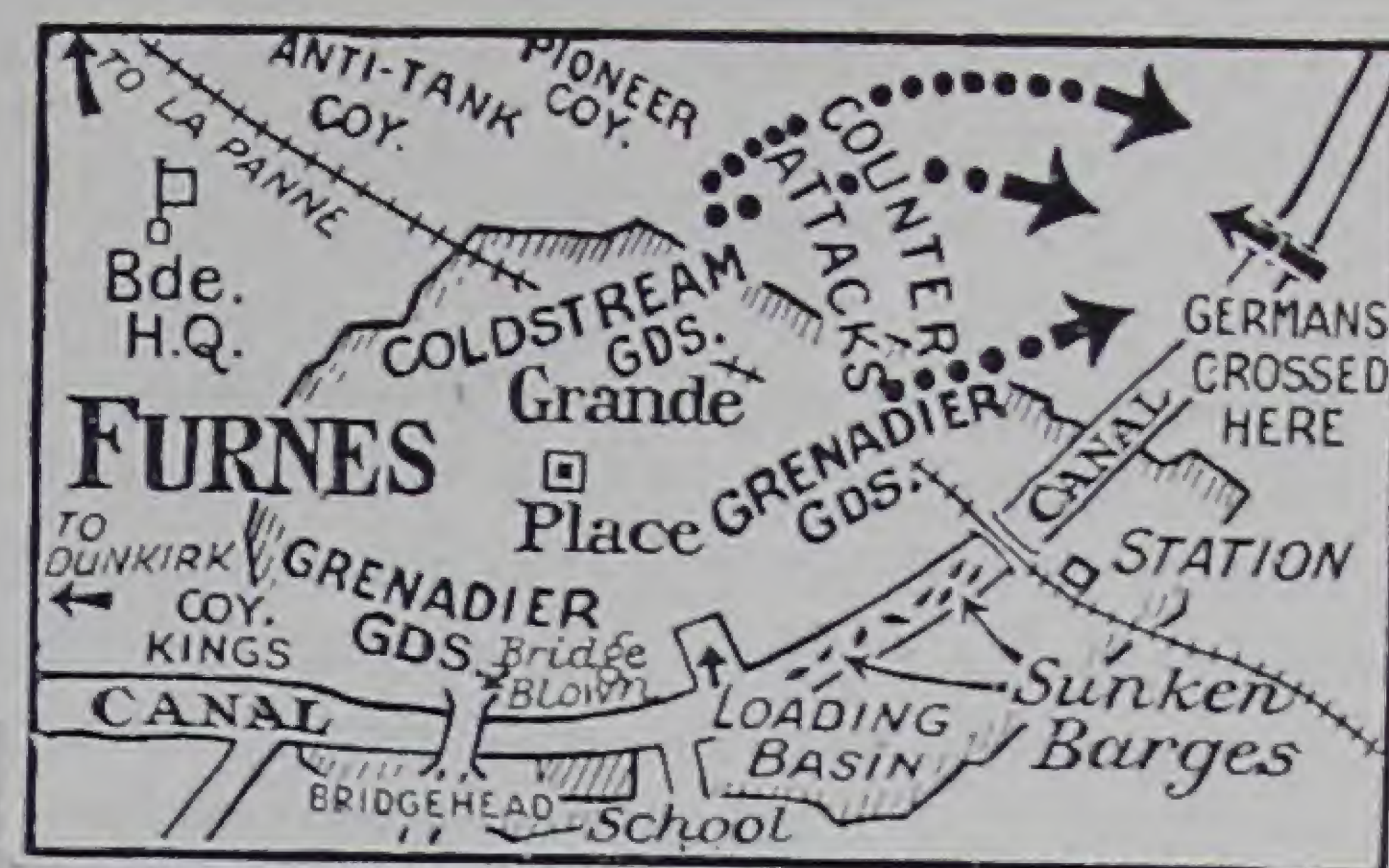
cycles headed by a motor-car appeared on the opposite bank of the river, just as the

The Enemy Patrol commander of one company of "Y" battalion was making a reconnaissance. He himself opened fire with an anti-tank rifle and knocked out the car. A burst from a Bren gun then swept the motor-cyclists, who took refuge in a house, and mortar fire destroyed the house. No more trouble was experienced from the enemy patrol, but in the fighting which now ensued the sniping activities of Fifth Columnists continued to be very troublesome.

By this time the German breakthrough to the south necessitated a new withdrawal to the line of the River Escaut (Scheldt). The Grenadier battalions took up positions on the western bank of the river (see relief map in page 875), with their left on Helchin. On May 21 the enemy opened violent artillery, mortar and machine-gun fire and launched numerous determined attacks. These were repulsed, but in one place a crossing was forced and some companies of "Z" battalion had to fall back. The position was under direct enemy observation, there was no cover, and every movement drew destructive fire. The crew of a Bren gun carrier did splendid work driving across country and spotting the positions of the enemy machine-guns. A counter-attack was immediately ordered, and it was then that Lance-Corporal H. Nicholls picked up a Bren gun and, firing from the hip as he ran, silenced three machine-guns and inflicted heavy casualties on massed enemy infantry, who were forced back across the Escaut. For this action Lance-Corporal Nicholls was awarded the V.C.

"X" and "Y" battalions held the Escaut position for four days, before withdrawing to a prepared position on the Gort Line east of Roubaix, which

they held for three or four days. On the Gort Line a patrol of "Y" battalion was reconnoitring a farm when the farmer offered the men coffee and then disappeared. Within 20 minutes the patrol was surrounded. It put up a spirited resistance, killing many Germans, and suffered no casualties.



THE GUARDS LIVE UP TO THEIR REPUTATION

After a magnificent stand at Louvain, some of the Grenadier Guards fell back on Fournes (left) and there made a counter-attack (see map, from a sketch by Brigadier J. A. C. Whitaker, who was present at the action. Refer also to map on pp. 874 and 875). Below are some of the fine types of men who make up the Grenadier Guards, seen in forward positions in France. Photos, British Official; E.N.A.; Map, "Daily Telegraph"



When the decision was taken to evacuate the B.E.F., the battalions were soon on the move again in the direction of Dunkirk. "Z" battalion had just crossed the River Lys after a long and tiring march when it was learnt that the enemy had broken through on the right, between Commines and Ypres, and that the battalion was to restore the situation. It made a counter-attack and, after a hazardous advance across open country, the battalion reached its objective and held it in spite of repeated and determined enemy efforts. Eventually it was ordered to withdraw to Messines, and then it made its way to Moeres, where it was ordered to be ready to support a brigade which was being hard pressed south of Furnes. The ground was reconnoitred, but the battalion's services were not called upon.

Meanwhile, "X" and "Y" battalions marched on Furnes, where again there was a danger of the enemy breaking through. A reconnaissance party consisting of the Commanding Officer of "Y" and two company commanders came under fire and were all hit. A young officer found them lying in an exposed position in the main street of the town, which was raked by machine-gun fire. Displaying complete disregard of his own safety, under heavy machine-gun and rifle fire, he carried the Commanding Officer, who was dead, and the two company commanders, who were wounded, into the doorway of a house.

But the enemy's fire was so heavy that no stretcher-bearers could approach, and an entry had to be forced from the back. "X" and "Y" battalions

took up positions and were subjected to an intense and accurate bombardment, which was obviously directed by enemy agents on the spot, and a telephone was actually found in the church tower. A reserve ammunition truck was hit and set on fire, but the mortar bombs were unloaded before they could explode and were put to good use in blowing up two German mortar positions. Many houses in the town were burning furiously, and the situation was made still more uncomfortable by the fact that little artillery support was available and no counter-battery fire could be given. Meanwhile, the enemy launched repeated and determined attacks and attempted to cross the canal in rubber boats. All these attempts were frustrated; a section of "Y" battalion under a lance-corporal drove out and killed 20 Germans while itself suffering only one casualty.

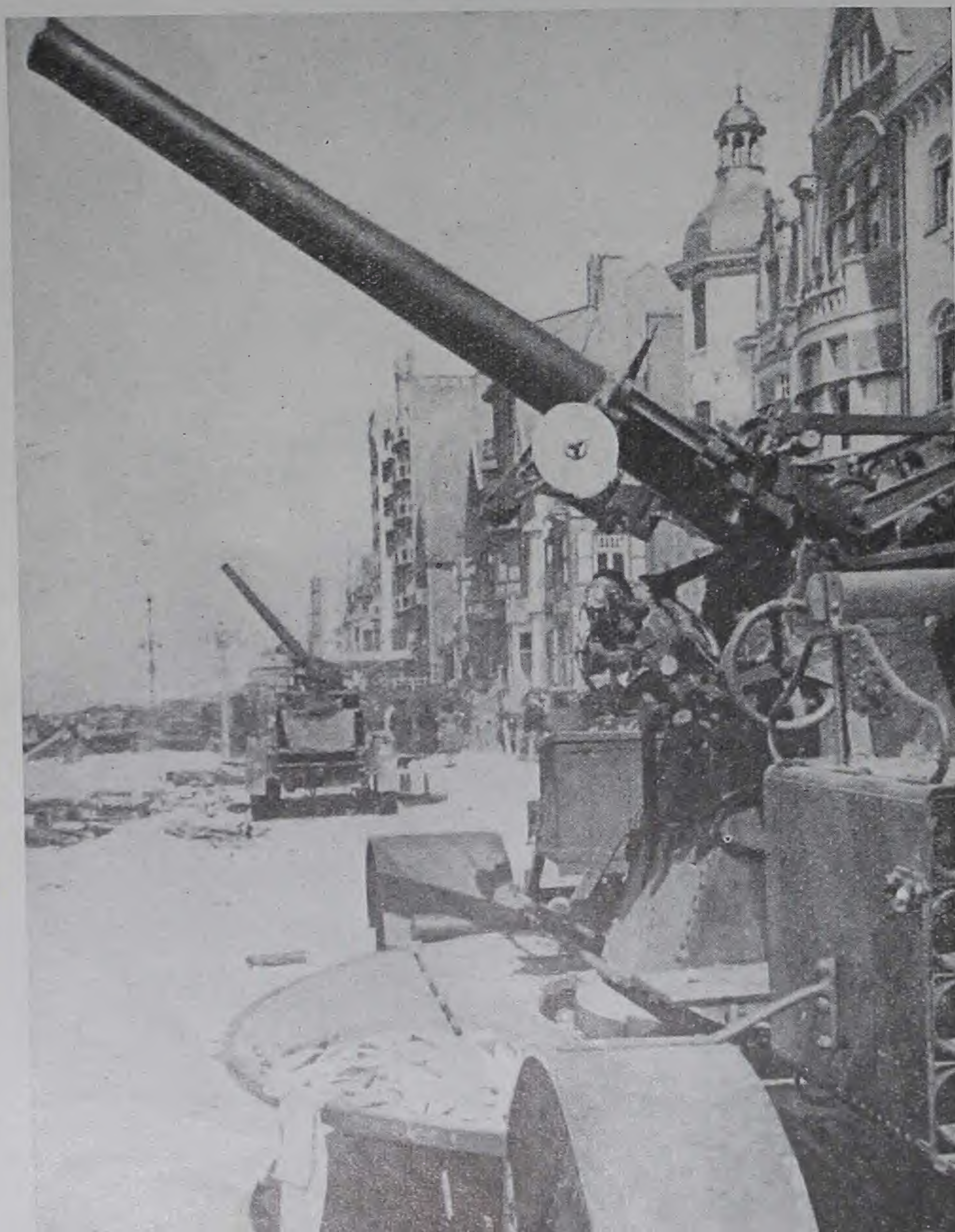
Farther to the north two line battalions were hard pressed and a gap was opened between them. Soon after mid-day news reached "Y" battalion headquarters that the enemy was crossing the canal unopposed. The same young officer who had dragged the dead C.O. and the two wounded company commanders into cover was sent to learn the exact position. He had with him the Bren carrier platoon. By resolute leadership he rallied the troops on the spot and led them back to the canal in a counter-attack. His action averted an enemy break-through between the brigade area and the sea.

During this time the transport column and other details of "Z" battalion had been ordered to the neighbourhood of Dunkirk, there to destroy all their trucks except those carrying arms, food and ammunition. All the vehicles were present and in good order, and the melancholy task of destruction was duly performed. The personnel then made their way to the sea at La Panne, where there was indescribable confusion. Trucks, wagons and cars, abandoned under orders by British units, were being plundered and driven away by civilians and other nondescript people. The men of the transport column armed themselves with all the Bren guns and anti-tank rifles they could collect and established a post across the road, enforcing order and putting a stop to the pilfering. Next, they contributed to the defence of the position at Furnes by holding a front of half a mile along the canal east of the town. The situation at Furnes was saved and the final withdrawal to the sea made possible. But the epic of Dunkirk is the subject of a later Chapter.

ABANDONED GUNS AT LA PANNE

After making a splendid stand along the Dyle and then the Scheldt, the B.E.F. was forced eventually to withdraw. Some units marched on Furnes, and below are seen anti-aircraft guns on the sea front of La Panne near by, abandoned when the B.E.F. was ordered to retire upon Dunkirk.

Photo, E.N.A.



**Fateful
Counter-
Attack**

ON THE EVE OF DUNKIRK: WITHDRAWAL BEHIND THE 'CORUNNA LINE'

After the Belgian Surrender—Plight of the Allied Armies in Flanders—Stubborn Rearguard Actions—Loss of Armentières and Bailleul—Germans Take Lille—Two French Divisions Cut Their Way Out—What was Happening on the Somme—Behind the 'Corunna Line' the B.E.F. Withdraws to Dunkirk

(See also Chapters 147-148, on Lord Gort's Despatches)

WITH the surrender of the 300,000 Belgians—all that was left of King Leopold's army—who had been holding the Allied line between Ypres and Ostend, the northern flank of the B.E.F. was exposed to the enemy attack, and the possibility of being cut off from the coast became imminent. On their right the French, too, found themselves in a truly desperate situation. Yet

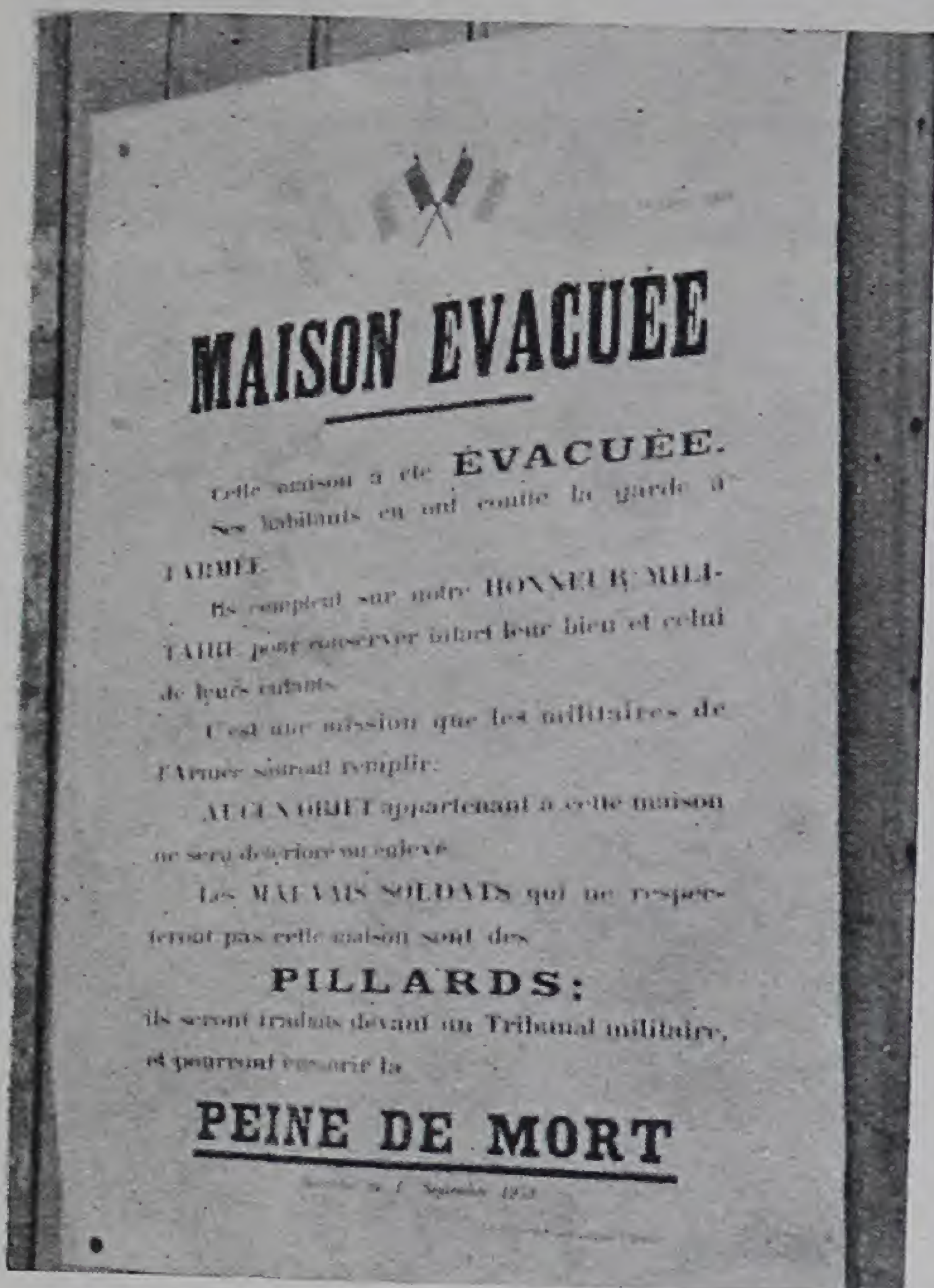
Although ceaselessly attacked on their two flanks from the east and west, they are disputing every inch of the ground to the enemy and clinging to their ground or counter-attacking with as much stubbornness as bravery." While facing this assault, the communiqué went on, the road to Ypres, to Furnes and to Dunkirk was laid open to the enemy when the Allied army under the direct command of King Leopold received from its King the order to cease fire. "Since then our troops under the command of General Blanchard and General Prioux, in close collaboration with the British Army under Lord Gort, have had to face an increased danger. Showing in these grave circumstances indomitable resolution, they are making every effort to manoeuvre towards the coast at the price of very hard fighting."

An authoritative statement issued in London stressed what hardly needed stressing, that the B.E.F. was in no sense a beaten force. Everything the British troops had been asked to do they had done. They had never been beaten back, they had never been broken. Every time they had been asked to counter-attack they had done so successfully, and every time they had been ordered to withdraw they had done so in good order. Never once had they lost discipline or morale. "Every time they have found themselves pitted against the Germans man to man they have proved themselves the better, just as their brothers in the Navy and Air Force."

Marching and fighting continuously for over a fortnight with little rest, bombed continually, shelled and attacked

by tanks, they had never wavered. The men could never have done what they had done without confidence and trust in their leaders; this confidence could never have existed had not the officers themselves shown all the qualities of leadership. Great difficulties had confronted the officers—not merely the normal difficulties of war, but, in addition, roads blocked by thousands of refugees, communications bombed and destroyed; but, in spite of all, the B.E.F. had moved as a coherent whole throughout the operations. Now once again they stood at bay—in grievous peril, as Mr. Churchill said, but in good heart. Nevertheless, the Premier went on to tell the House of Commons that it should prepare itself for hard and heavy tidings. At that moment it might well seem that nothing short of a miracle could have saved the B.E.F. from encirclement and eventual surrender; the epic of Dunkirk was yet to come.

On the eve of their new and greater ordeal the troops were cheered by a



ARMY GUARDS FRENCH HOMES

This proclamation placed evacuated French houses under the care of the army. "The inhabitants," reads the notice, "count upon our military honour to preserve intact their property Bad soldiers who do not respect this house are looters; they will be brought before a Military Tribunal and may incur the death penalty."

Photo, Section Cinéma de l'Armée

there were no gaps in the line and no confusion, although it was obvious that retreat to the coast was inevitable.

"The French and British troops fighting in Northern France," read the communiqué issued in Paris on the night of May 29, "are maintaining with a heroism worthy of their traditions a struggle of exceptional intensity. For a fortnight past they have been fighting a battle separated from the main body of our armies by German formations which are being constantly reinforced.



THESE WERE NO DEFEATISTS

Left, General Blanchard, who commanded the Allied armies in the North during the rearguard action towards Dunkirk; right, General Prioux, in command of the French forces during that perilous exploit.

Photos, Associated Press; E.N.A.



WHEN OSTEND WAS NO PLACE FOR TOURISTS

The photograph at the top of the page shows a pall of smoke hanging over the Gare Maritime at Ostend, well-known to thousands of cross-Channel tourists. The photo was taken by a British officer during the gallant rearguard action of the B.E.F. covering the retreat towards the Channel ports. Lower photo shows British infantry moving along a road in Flanders.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright; Planet News

message which the King sent to Lord Gort—which, after saying with what pride and admiration their countrymen had been watching the courageous resistance of the B.E.F., went on to declare that “the hearts of every one of us at home are with you and with your magnificent troops in this hour of peril.”

Meanwhile, the fierce mêlée of battle was proceeding on the Flanders plain.

From hour to hour it was difficult to follow the developments of the struggle, but so far as the left flank was concerned, it was all too obvious that a retreat along the coast to Dunkirk should be carried out at the earliest moment. For Ostend was already in enemy hands, and the German vanguard, having passed through and leaving behind it masses of sullen and

silent disarmed Belgians, was reported to be at Dixmude. So, fighting a series of most stubborn rearguard actions, the British fell back from the banks of the Yser and the Yser Canal, where there had been fighting of a most desperate nature. Armentières was abandoned again after fierce fighting, and so, too, was Bailleul. To the south, Lille, which had been held by the French, was now claimed by the enemy, and General Prioux, Commander of the French First Army, was reported to have been captured near Cassel with many of his staff. Two of the French divisions fought their way out of the German



BELGIANS FLEE THE HUN ONCE MORE

To block the roads and hinder military traffic was one of Germany's first aims on the outbreak of the blitzkrieg in May, 1940, and for that reason open Belgian towns were wantonly attacked from the air to cause panic and start a flow of refugees. A scene from one of these German raids is depicted above; civilians are leaving with what household goods they can transport.

Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright



BELGIUM IN 1914

Bearing a remarkable similarity to photographs taken near the front line in Belgium during the German invasion, the spirit of the British Army had changed even before the war.

Photo, British Army



A 1915 SCENE

During 1914-18 is this one of Royal Irish Fusiliers
May, 1940. Subsequent fighting showed that the
appearance since the war of a generation before.
Copyright



GATEWAY TO DEEDS OF BRITISH GLORY

Familiar to thousands of British soldiers during the war of 1914-18 was the Menin Gate at Ypres, where afterwards the new gateway, seen above, a Memorial to the Missing of the Salient, was erected. Here men of the 12th Lancers are seen before the Menin Gate in May, 1940, awaiting the German onslaught. This time, alas, Ypres could not be saved.

Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright

trap, however, and struggled northward to join the British on the road to Dunkirk. There was now, of course, no question of an attempt to rejoin the main French armies, who were massing behind the Somme and the Aisne.

Hurricanes and Spitfires maintained offensive patrols over the Dunkirk area. Without the R.A.F. the withdrawal of the Allied armies from the trap so confidently laid by the enemy would have been impossible.

While the troops in ever-increasing numbers dribbled through to Dunkirk and safety, a line of defence was maintained by the divisions constituting the Allied rearguard. To the British this line became known as the "Corunna Line," in honour of that other great rearguard action which resulted in a British army being taken off in safety from beneath the very nose of the enemy. To some extent the line consisted of entrenchments and bastions of earth hastily thrown up, but its chief strength lay in the deliberate flooding of the Yser valley, a defence measure which converted the fields across which the Germans must advance into a watery expanse.

Behind the Corunna Line, defended with cool bravery by some of the crack



Needless to say, the German High Command were in an ebullient mood. "Continuing their annihilating attack on the British Expeditionary Force, the German troops took Ypres and the Kemmel Ridge by storm"—so began their communiqué issued on May 29. "The fate of the French armies in Artois is sealed. Their resistance south of Lille has broken down. The British Army, which is pressed together in the area between Dixmude, Armentières, Bailleul, and Bergues, west of Dunkirk, is threatened with annihilation by the German concentric attacks."

A day later they announced that "the great battle in Flanders and Artois is drawing to a close with the annihilation of the British and French armies fighting in that area. Since yesterday the British Expeditionary Force also is in complete dissolution."

Wishful Thinking The British troops are in headlong flight in the direction of the coast,

leaving all their incalculable war material in German hands. Swimming and in small boats, they try to reach the British ships lying in the roads—ships attacked by the German Air Force with devastating results."

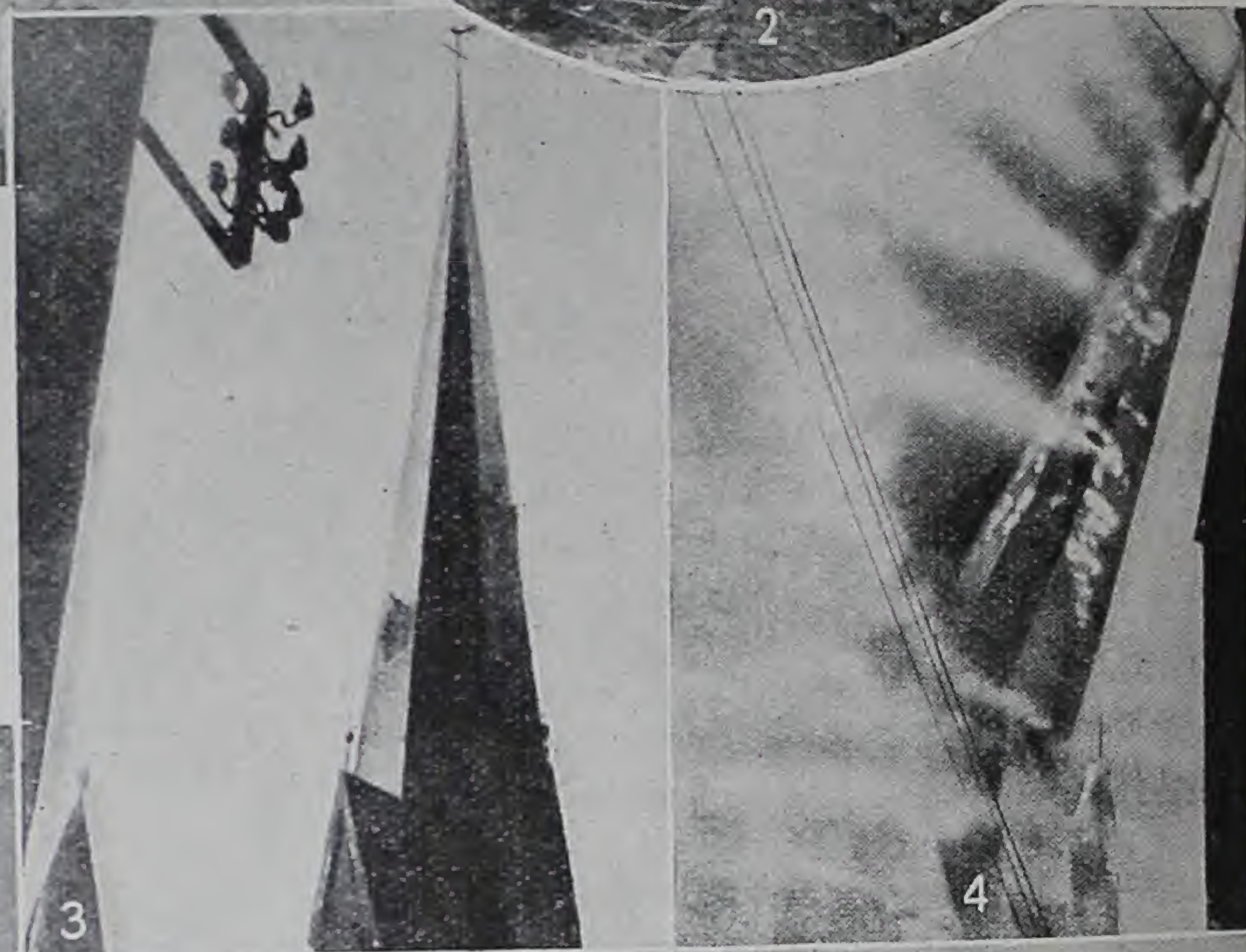
It was over Dunkirk, indeed, that the British fighters and bombers showed beyond a doubt that they were more than a match for the Luftwaffe. Day and night the bombers kept up their pressure on the enemy's lines of communication—on his tanks, motorized columns and troops, while formations of



MORE HAVOC IN ARMENTIÈRES

Armentières, celebrated in song and almost entirely destroyed during the war of 1914-18, was again badly damaged in the Battle for France in 1940. Top, left, is a street of the town before the war, with the Church of St. Vaast in the background. Above, a building in Armentières ablaze after German air bombing.

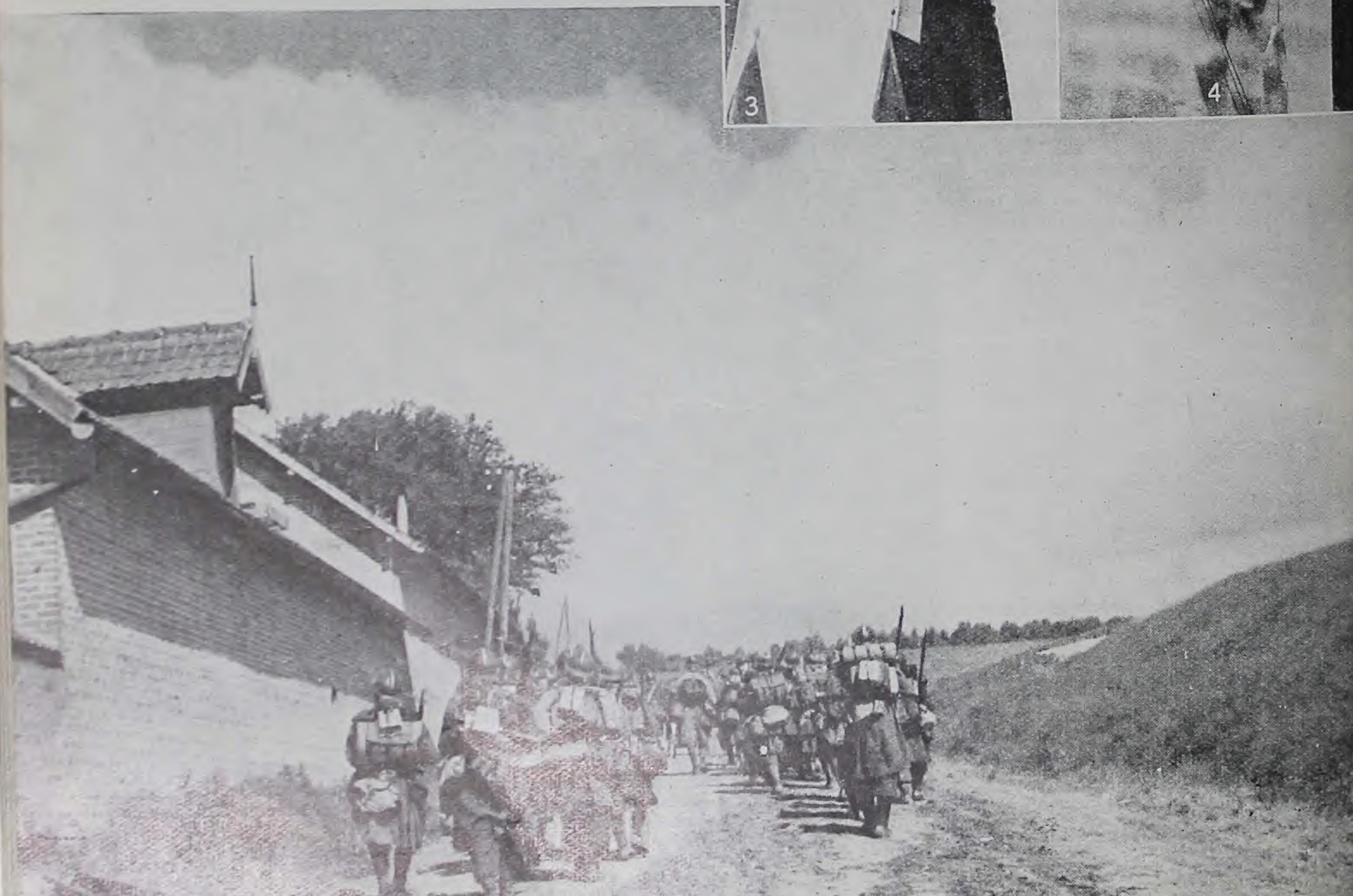
Photos, British Official : Crown Copyright ; A. J. Insall, Copyright A.P.



FRANCE IN THE GRIP OF WAR

In this page are scenes of the Battle of France. 1, a detachment of French soldiers lining an embankment; 2, a French mounted unit on the march; 3 and 4, a church steeple, a landmark for miles around, photographed during the bombardment of a French town: on the left it is seen a minute or two before being hit by a shell, while on the right it is crashing to earth after a direct hit; 5, French infantry on their way up to the line.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright; Section Cinéma de l'Armée

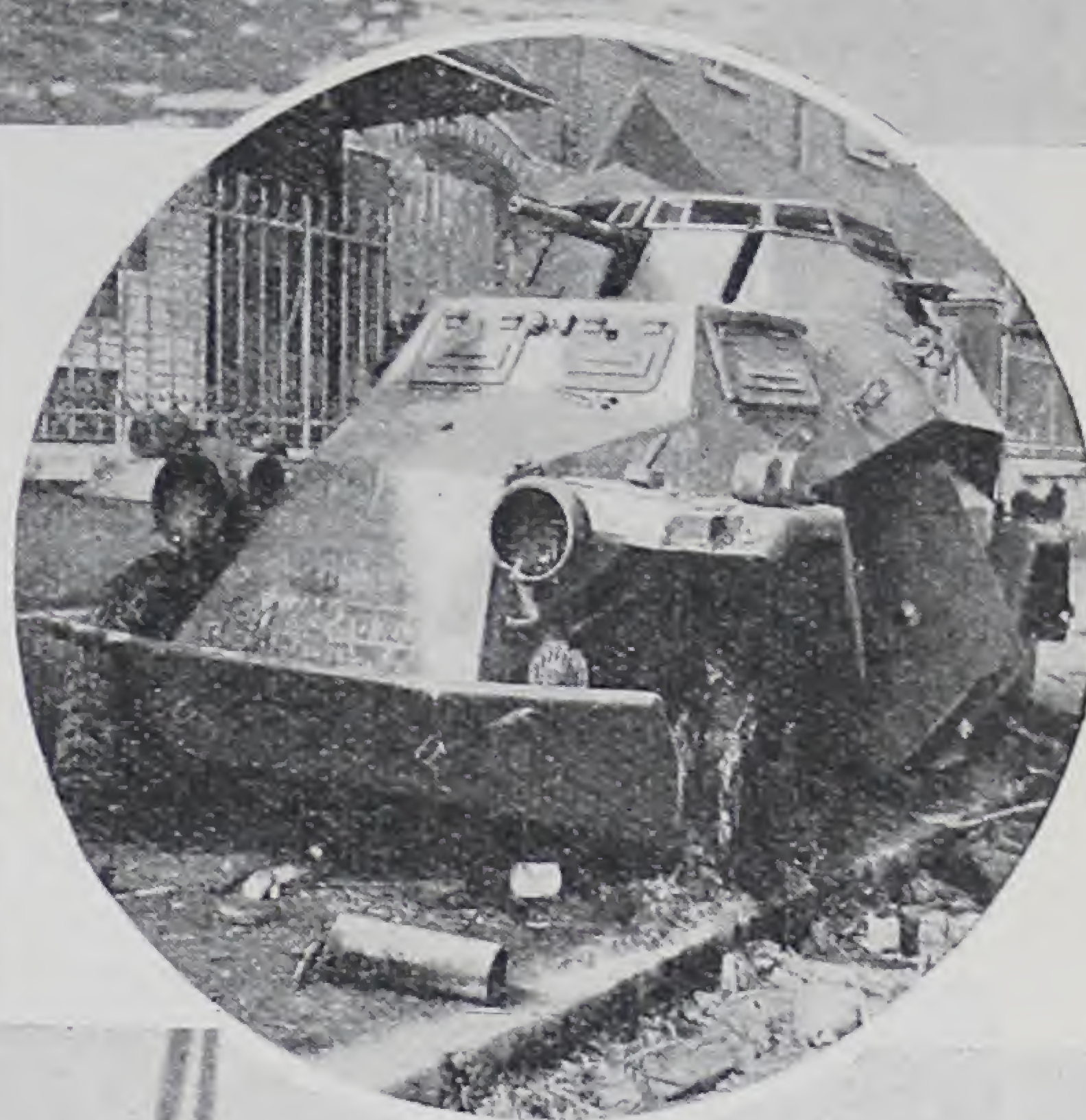




TANKS OF THE BLITZKRIEG

Mechanized units in the Battle of France. Above, Nazi tanks in Flanders find progress difficult through flooded roads; circle, a German armoured car shattered by a direct hit; below, abandoned French tanks in Avesnes-les-Aubert (near Cambrai); bottom, a heavy French tank going up to the battle.

Photos, Associated Press; E.N.A.; Planet News



regiments of the British army, hundreds of thousands of British and French troops were enabled to reach Dunkirk, and from Dunkirk passed to the waiting ships which carried them across the Channel to England. How ludicrous was the assertion that the British were fleeing in disorder, that the B.E.F. was in dissolution, is clear from the fact that 335,000 men, British and French, were safely embarked. It was no disorganized rabble that fought the battle of Dunkirk, but an army of seasoned veterans that played a most valiant part in that "miracle of deliverance."

The retreat to Boulogne and the heroic defences of that town and of Calais are described in Chapter 89.

We must now glance at the position along the great river barrier where the French armies, aided by units of the

Position on the Somme B.E.F. which had been left in that region, were preparing for a desperate stand against the enemy

onslaught that was bound to come once the fate of the Allied armies in Flanders should be decided. The longer the Northern Army held out, the better the southern front could be consolidated.

On the Somme, a French communiqué of May 26 announced, French troops continued to mop up German units that had crossed the river four or five days previously. Next day French troops were in action from near the mouth of the Somme at Abbeville to the region of Ham and Péronne;

several bridge-heads were retaken from the Germans. At the "Charnière," or hinge, where the line swung leftwards and westwards near Montmédy, there was as yet no disquietude: the hinge held good, and at this joint in the armour of defence all went well despite murderous enemy assaults.

Heavy German attacks at Montmédy on the 28th were driven back, said the French report. The German communiqué of May 29 said that isolated attacks by French infantry had been repulsed by tanks. The French line now ran from the Luxemburg border to Attigny, and thence along the Aisne.

The northernmost forts of Montmédy and Laferte were still holding out and exacting a fearful price from the enemy. In Champagne the Germans were increasing their pressure. Low-flying bombers, with armoured divisions, tried to batter a way through, aided by masses of infantry. On the Somme, during the 29th, things were fairly quiet, and the enemy made only local attacks as yet. A raid to the south-west of Château Porcien (on the north bank of the Aisne, near Rethel) was repulsed.

M. Reynaud, the French Premier, in a broadcast made in the evening of May 28, said that "in the South there are



HUMANITY MEANS NOTHING TO NAZIS

Following their declared principle of total warfare the Nazis, with complete ruthlessness, bombed and machine-gunned Red Cross trains and ambulances. Above, an ambulance train, clearly marked, demolished by Nazi bombs. Top right, a French ambulance, plainly bearing the Red Cross, riddled by bomb splinters.

Photos, Service Cinéma de l'Armée; Service Cinématographique de l'Air

French divisions who hold a new front which follows the Somme and the Aisne and then joins up with the intact Maginot Line." The French communiqué issued on May 30 spoke of fighting along the valleys of those two rivers on the previous day and claimed local successes. The last of the bridge-heads which the enemy had established on the left bank of the Somme had been recaptured.

The region of Abbeville was again in French hands on the last day of May, recaptured from the Germans after two days of fierce fighting. In this brilliant operation the Germans lost several motorized columns, but not a single French tank was taken by the enemy.

German aircraft bombed Marseilles and other towns in south-east France on June 1; next day enemy raids were made on the Rhône valley. The region of Lyons, attacked on June 1, was again raided. After a meeting in Paris of the Imperial War Cabinet



ROYAL ULSTER RIFLES AT DUNKIRK

Among the regiments which took part in the epic withdrawal to Dunkirk was the Royal Ulster Rifles, by one of whose officers the photographs in this page were taken. Top, Royal Ulster Rifles in hastily dug trenches in the vicinity of Dunkirk. Left, one man takes a brief rest during a lull in the fighting. Above, ruined houses in a Dunkirk street. Below, smoke rising from houses on the outskirts of Dunkirk. In the foreground is one of the trenches occupied by the B.E.F.

Photos, "News Chronicle"





June 2; near Rethel, where an enemy raid had been made five days previously, there was some shelling and "a few shots from automatic arms." Reynaud and Pétain visited a sector of the Somme front and seemed well satisfied with what was being done by the French High Command. A French communiqué issued late on the 3rd said that the enemy was bringing up reinforcements on the right bank of the Aisne and making close contact with the French positions to the west of the Saar. The Germans were active in patrol work

unreadiness of the German Command at this stage as to the enterprise of the French. The time for the massed enemy assault was evidently not yet ripe. The line at this date ran along the Somme **The River Line** from the Estuary to the point where the Crozat Canal left the river of St. Simon, southwest of St. Quentin, with a few French bridge-heads on the right bank and one German bridge-head in the Amiens area on the left bank. The line then followed the Crozat Canal to the Oise, the Oise to the junction of the Aisne-Oise Canal,

during the week-end the following statement was made:

"The Supreme War Council carried out a general survey of the situation and reached full agreement regarding all the measures which that situation called for.

"The meeting of the Supreme War Council gave full proof that the Allied Governments and peoples are more than ever implacably resolved to pursue in the closest possible concord the present struggle until complete victory is achieved."

Along the front of the Somme and the Aisne there was little activity on



CAPTURED NAZIS AND DOOMED SPY

Top left, a very young German soldier captured during the fighting in the Low Countries. Above, German prisoners taken by the French having a meal in a French prisoner-of-war camp. Left, a Belgian woman, convicted of spying in the Dunkirk region, is being taken from one of the Dunkirk forts, where she has been interrogated, by French marines.

Photos, Section de l'Armée; Sport & General; Associated Press



and air reconnaissance during June 4, and also made sporadic local attacks, apparently with the object of testing the Somme and Aisne defences. Enemy artillery fire with the same object was reported. In fighting on the Lower Somme the French took some prisoners, but it was clear that any such successes were to be attributed as much to

and the Aisne to near Rethel. Thence it crossed the upper Argonne to the Meuse, near its junction with the Chiers. A little farther on began the still intact Maginot Line.

British troops, including some of the finest soldiers in the Army, were holding a section of the Somme front, though only a small part in comparison with that manned by their French brothers in arms. Their spirit was superb, and they were only too eager to play their part in stemming the German advance.

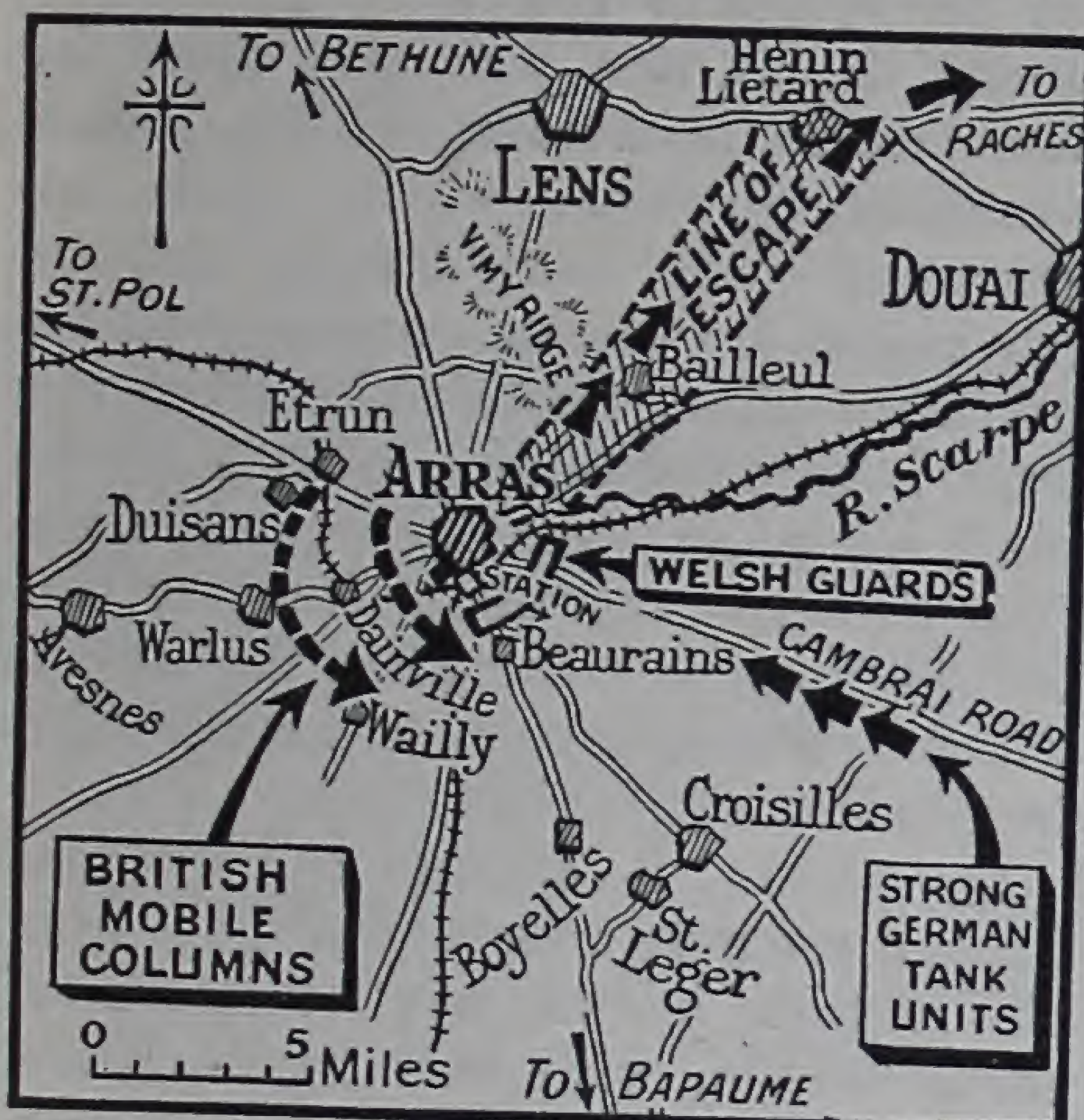
At dawn on June 5 there began the enemy offensive, which was destined to have such a grave and far-reaching effect on the course of the war—ranging along the Somme and the Aisne on a front extending from the Channel to the Laon-Soissons road. It is described in Chapter 91.

THE BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE IN FLANDERS: STORIES OF THE BATTLE

General Petre's Defence of Arras—An Offensive by the Durhams and a Tank Brigade—Enemy Attempts to Cross the Scarpe—Gort Orders a General Withdrawal—Petre's Force is Got Away—Adventures of a Tank Battalion—Royal Artillery at Wytschaete—Saving the Guns

(See also Chapter 148, on Lord Gort's Despatches)

FOR generations to come men will speak with pride and admiration of the great deeds of the British Expeditionary Force in its campaign in Flanders in the early summer months of 1940. We who live so near to the actual event know at once both more and less than will be the case with them; we have accounts of heroic stands, of gallant actions here and there, on this



This map shows the British line of retreat from Arras when the enemy's superiority in numbers made withdrawal imperative.

By courtesy of "The Daily Telegraph"

day and on that; not yet, however, have we the material out of which to create a narrative which shall be not only filled with the interest that always attaches to the telling of great deeds well done, but also complete in its detail and its all-embracing scope. Here, in this chapter, then, we take several tales of battle and tell them as they were told by men who had their part in them to Mr. Douglas Williams, War Correspondent of the "Daily Telegraph."

On the same day (May 18) that the Grenadiers were attacked on the Dendre, the enemy delivered a violent assault on the Allied line some miles to the south in the neighbourhood of St. Quentin, and so menacing did the situation become, particularly in view of the infiltration by Nazi tanks, that it became necessary to order the abandonment of Arras, the town which, up to only a few days before, had been Lord Gort's headquarters. Here, then, our first story has its commencement.

The defence of the city and the surrounding area was entrusted by Lord Gort, who was still in Belgium with advanced G.H.Q., to Gen. Petre, summoned from his 12th Division headquarters at Abbeville, who later came under the orders of General Franklyn as G.O.C. of the area, with headquarters at Vimy.

Available troops, necessarily scanty, were disposed to the best advantage to meet the Germans. The 36th Infantry Brigade (commanded by Brigadier Roupell, V.C.), which was subsequently overrun by the Germans, was posted round Doullens to guard the back areas, with one battalion (Royal West Kents) detached to guard the Somme crossings at Péronne. Two brigades of the 23rd Division (Territorials) were strung along the Canal du Nord to face the enemy coming through the twenty-mile gap he had made in that area.

For the defence of the city itself were available one battalion of Welsh Guards, some mixed units of G.H.Q. troops, such as construction companies, supply details, and the like, and a somewhat battered French armoured division. Except for the Welsh Guards, the British troops, whose duties up to that time had been largely civilian, were necessarily ill-trained and ill-equipped to meet the formidable enemy. There was little or no artillery available, although later a battery of 25-pounders was lent by the 5th Division and a two-pounder anti-tank battery came from the 50th Division.

General Petre established his headquarters in the ancient pile of the Palais St. Vaast, whose underground cellars furnished perfect protection against air raids. Two officers were lent to him as Staff Officers, but he had no clerks and no communications but a few gallant dispatch riders (plus a wireless set which worked intermittently) and one cipher officer. He was almost completely cut off from G.H.Q., except for the rare arrival of a liaison officer after a perilous trip over heavily shelled roads; he fully realized that the enemy was determined, at all costs, to capture Arras—a key city in the communications of Northern France.

Ammunition was plentiful, and there were stocks of food, including one of the N.A.A.F.I. depots, the stores of which, distributed gratis, were much enjoyed.

By this time the population of the city had dwindled to a mere 3,000, all of whom had sought refuge in civil A.R.P. shelters or in the famous caves, formed by the excavation through centuries of local building stone, from the enemy. The streets were deserted, houses and shops shuttered.

The defending troops were posted along the southern and eastern perimeter of the city in hastily constructed strong points and machine-gun posts. From May 20 heavy fighting developed, with frequent raids by dive bombers, which caused some casualties and made communications difficult. Welcome reinforcements arrived in the shape of the Green Howards and the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers, but enemy pressure



HE DEFENDED ARRAS

General R. L. Petre, commanding the 12th Division of the B.E.F., was entrusted with the defence of Arras. His troops held the city for some time in face of greatly superior enemy forces. (See also photograph, p. 1553.)

Photo, Lafayette



THESE REGIMENTS DEFENDED ARRAS

Above, Green Howards in training. Above, right, a motor-cycle unit of the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers ready to start off on exercise. Below, men of the Royal West Kent Regiment in a forward area of the B.E.F. Below, right, Welsh Guardsmen with a two-inch mortar at a spot in France where their fathers fought in the war of 1914-18. All these regiments were represented in the defence of Arras in May, 1940.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright



direct fire, but the pressure became greater and greater, and heavy counter-attacks were launched on the anti-tank localities which the two columns had established at Beaurains and Warlus.

The enemy also began a series of desperate attempts to cross the River Scarpe. A bridging train was destroyed by our artillery, but the German infantry continued to press forward in waves to launch their assault boats. Our Bren guns could not fire fast enough to cope with the packed masses of Germans,

who dashed forward frantically, suffering tremendous losses.

In view of the enemy's obvious superiority in strength, both columns began to withdraw north of the city, where General Petre's force had already realized that they could not hold out much longer. With much of the city burning, the streets harassed hourly by dive-bombing and with continual alarms at points all round the perimeter, defence was becoming more and more difficult. German forces, some of them

appearing in various disguises, had already reached the area of the Citadel, and preparations were discussed for a last stand at the Palais.

Finally, at 1.30 on the morning of May 24, a dishevelled and exhausted liaison officer arrived at General Petre's headquarters, after a five-hour motor trip, with orders from Lord Gort for a general withdrawal. Only two hours remained before daybreak, but the evacuation took place in perfect order. It was started down the Douai road,



BRITISH H.Q. AT ARRAS

The Palais Saint Vaast at Arras was the headquarters of Maj.-Gen. Petre during severe fighting around the town. This building was almost completely destroyed during the war of 1914-18 and afterwards rebuilt.

Photo, E.N.A.

was such that General Petre decided that he could not continue to hold the outskirts of the town on the south, and a withdrawal was ordered to the line of the railway station.

The bridge over the cutting was blown up, and the cutting itself, six or seven railway lines broad at that point, was converted into an impenetrable tank obstacle by piling railway trains together four or five deep. Engines with open throttles were allowed to smash into each other until the whole area was a solid mass of jumbled carriages and smashed rolling-stock, behind which, and from the windows of houses on the main square facing the station, the British garrison took up its new defensive position.

Heavy incendiary bombing was carried out by the enemy that afternoon. It started many fires, which, owing to lack of wind, continued to smoulder, covering the whole city with a pall of black smoke. By May 22 the pressure round the town had become intense, and Lord Gort, through General Franklyn, decided that some kind of offensive was essential.

The purpose of the attack was two-fold. First, G.H.Q. was very anxious to make some cooperative attempt southwards to join hands with the French, who were understood to be on the eve of launching their eagerly awaited counter-attack northwards. Secondly, it was hoped to relieve the Arras garrison.

The task was entrusted to General Martell, of the 50th Division, who was given for the purpose one of his own

brigades, consisting of Durham Light Infantry and a tank brigade.

General Martell was instructed to clear an area about ten miles deep and four miles wide, west and south of Arras, by forming his forces into two small mobile columns which would advance along parallel lines a few miles apart. His troops had had little rest for several days, and, moreover, it was their first encounter with the Germans.

Each column consisted of one infantry battalion, one anti-tank battery, one battery 18-pounders, one company machine-guns, one tank battalion.

The operation went well in its initial stages. The left column did fine work, put many enemy tanks out of action, captured 400 prisoners, and killed many Germans.

The right column made some progress, but was held up by unexpectedly heavy enemy forces, and was also upset by the erratic behaviour of the French armoured division, which, while co-operating with our forces, mistook our troops for Germans and opened fire on them. Unfortunately also about this time both commanding officers of the tank battalion were killed, while the commander of one of the infantry battalions was also killed when the tank in which he was riding suffered a direct hit from a German field-gun.

By 6 p.m. it became evident that further progress was impossible; from observation points reinforcements of enemy tanks, with infantry in buses, could be seen moving down the road from Cambrai. Some were destroyed by

Check to
the Counter-
Offensive



ARRAS OLD AND NEW

The façade of the ancient Ostel des Poissonniers, in Arras, once the meeting-place of the Fish-mongers' Corporation. It stood undamaged throughout the war of 1914-18. Above, is the Rue Gambetta, Arras, with the Hôtel du Commerce (rebuilt 1929), familiar to many soldiers of 1914-18.

Photos, G. MacCormack

but just outside Arras it was found that the bridge over the Scarpe had been prematurely blown up. It was at first considered a misfortune, but later turned out to be a blessing in disguise, for a scouting party of some twenty which had crossed the broken span were captured by a large party of Germans a short way down the road. The remaining columns were then switched to the Hénin-Liétard road, which at that time was the only free exit from the city, the Germans having occupied at least 330 deg. of the perimeter.

All that morning General Petre's force, together with remnants of the 5th and 50th Divisions, moved in a packed mass, nose to tail, down the narrow road; but not a single German plane was in the air, and the whole force reached comparative safety north of Douai without interference or casualties.

Further details of the fighting on May 21 are forthcoming in the shape of an account of the fortunes of one of the

two tank battalions placed at General Martel's disposal. This battalion had gone into Belgium on May 12, but after a few days had been ordered back to Orchies, in the old Gort Line, and thence to Vimy, where it was placed under the orders of the 50th Division.

It arrived in the Bois de la Folie, near Vimy, shortly after dawn on May 21, and while the men snatched a bite of breakfast and a brief rest, the officers hurried to a house in Petit Vimy to receive the operation orders.

The counter-attack was to take place that same afternoon, and the battalion was given a start line along a railway track south-west of Arras. Despite the fact that the battalion had moved 300 miles in less than ten days, with practically no opportunity for the maintenance and repair of vehicles, 38 Mark I tanks (weighing about 10 tons each, with a crew of two, and armed with Vickers machine-guns) were available, plus seven Mark II tanks (weighing



LED COUNTER-OFFENSIVE

Brigadier Giffard Le Quesne Martel, D.S.O., M.C. (above), who prior to the war had been Deputy Director of Mechanization at the War Office, and afterwards commanded the 50th Division of the B.E.F., was in charge of the British counter-attack at Arras on May 23, 1940. (See p. 1543.)

Photo, Lafayette



GERMAN BOATS FOR RIVER TRANSPORT

In the actions around Arras on May 23, 1940, the Germans made extensive use of rubber boats in their efforts to cross the River Scarpe. Above, Nazis are seen paddling a similar boat across a Belgian river after their successful invasion of Belgium.

Photo, Associated Press

25 tons, carrying a crew of four, and armed with the two-pounder anti-tank gun) borrowed from another unit.

Sharp at 11 a.m. all moved off in proper order towards the start line, while the commanding officer and the adjutant went forward in light tanks to make contact with the battalion of Durham Light Infantry which they were instructed to support. On arrival, however, at Anzin St. Aubin, where the rendezvous had been given, they found that the infantry had not arrived, and they did not, in fact, put in an appearance until an hour later, having been delayed en route.

Tanks in Counter-Attack

The attack, however, began promptly at 2 p.m., and as the tanks rolled forward they came into immediate contact with the enemy in strong force. The crossing of the railway was made difficult by the fact that it was here running through a cutting and could be crossed only at a few places, and, in the hope of clearing out enemy forces which were holding them up, the seven large tanks were ordered forward to deal with them. They were not seen again.

Shortly afterwards the remainder of the tank force came under heavy fire from anti-tank guns, but they had no trouble in silencing the enemy as soon as the latter's positions were given away by the flash of the first discharge. The German crews packed up and



WHERE TANK MET TANK

Heavy engagements between British and German tank brigades took place at Beaurains (right), a southern suburb of Arras, during a counter-attack by Gen. Martell's forces on May 23, 1940. Above, a British crew running to man their tank. At the foot of the page is a map of Arras and its environs, showing the line of advance of Gen. Martell's troops.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright; G. MacCormack; Map by courtesy of "The Daily Telegraph"

moved off in a hurry at the first burst of our machine-gun fire.

The enemy infantry showed no great courage. On many occasions parties of them came running towards the British tanks, undoing their ammunition and revolver belts as they did so, and handing these in through the flaps to the British crews inside.

In other cases, so terrified were the Germans that in their eagerness to surrender they even climbed on top of the tanks and perched there with their hands in the air. Others lay down, shamming dead, and one tank, investigating a gravel pit, found no fewer than fifty Germans lying huddled together, hoping they would be passed over as dead, though in this they were disillusioned.

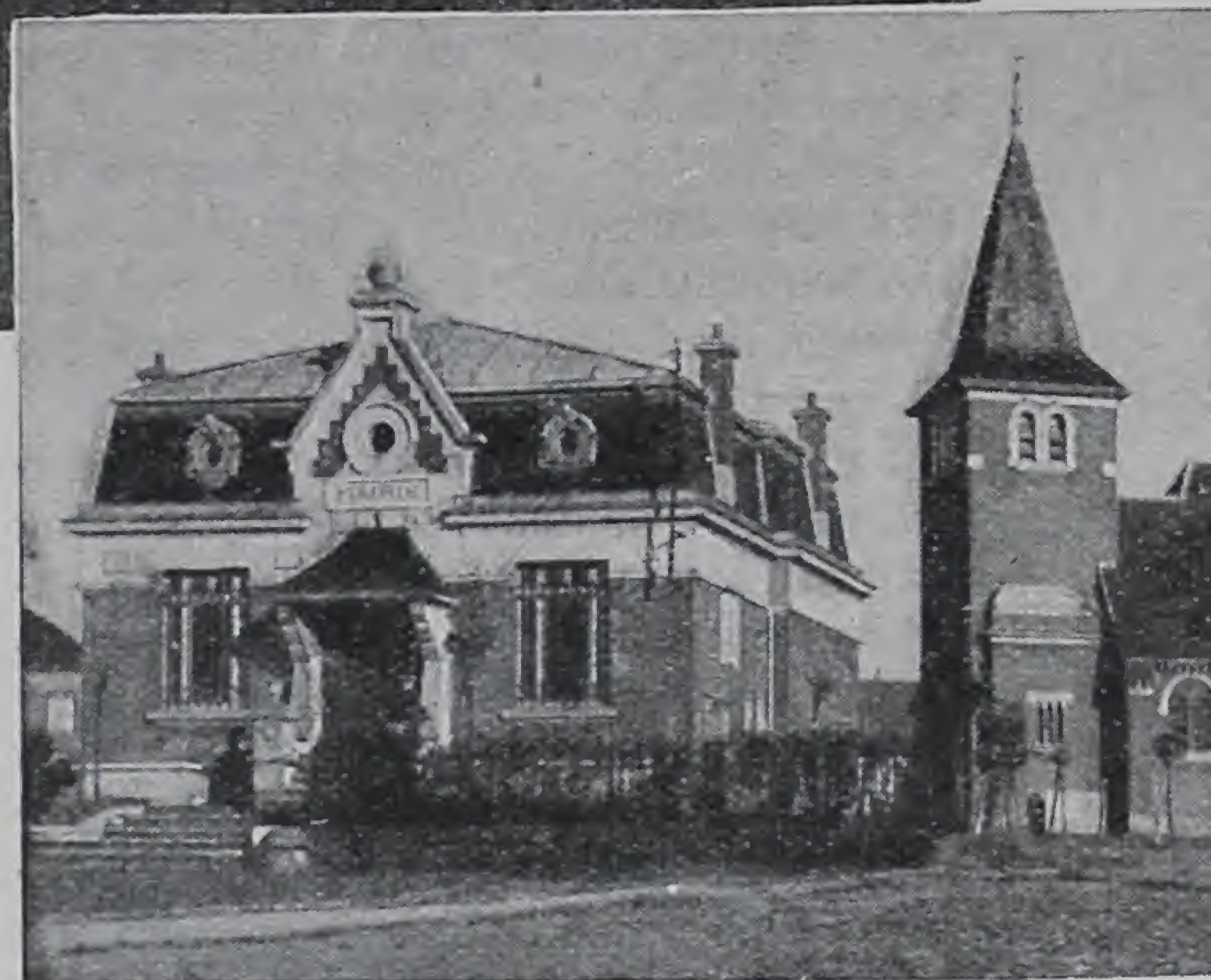
By this time the battle had spread out over a large area and had developed into individual fighting by individual tanks. A number of our tanks had had to be discarded owing to me-

chanical breakdowns, and the wireless communication sets on those still engaged were out of action or could not be used, as there had been no time to tune in all the sets on the same frequency.

We were inflicting heavy losses, and matters were progressing very favourably until the commanding officer, still directing the battle from his light tank, was killed by a direct hit from a German field battery at point-blank range as he stood up in the control tower.

There were still about a dozen tanks in this area. These were collected together by the senior officer present, and he led them to contact the Durham Light Infantry, who were now observed advancing across country in "open order" with their rifles at the "ready" and with Germans emerging from the crops around them with their hands up surrendering.

Farther on, the British tanks suddenly came upon a collection of German vehicles, including

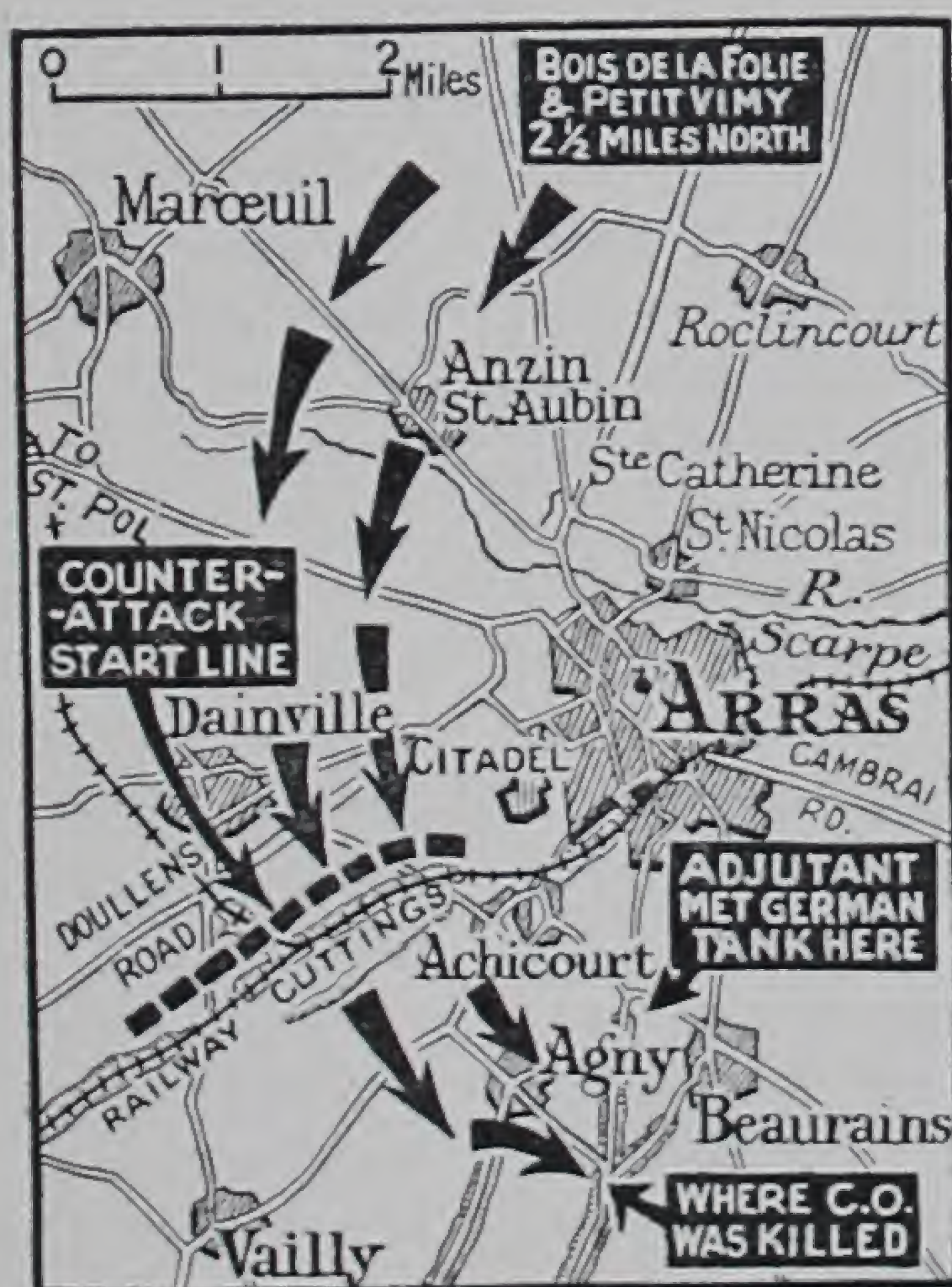


two enormous six-wheeled petrol containers. They opened immediate fire and destroyed the lot, including petrol tanks holding thousands of gallons.

By this time contact with the infantry had again been lost, and it later appeared that the D.L.I. had suffered heavy losses from a German dive-bombing attack which had forced the men to disperse into cover.

All the afternoon fighting continued, until, towards the evening, the tanks rallied behind the infantry, which were found again holding a position at Beaurains. Operations were confused, and neither side had any clear information where the other was.

At about nine o'clock, when the tank adjutant was holding a conference at a crossroad with the Acting Commanding Officer of the D.L.I. (the C.O. having become a casualty), they heard a rumble of tanks approaching. It was dark by this time, with a heavy pall of smoke covering the countryside. The Durham officer insisted that the tanks were German; the adjutant was equally positive that they were British.



Finally, the adjutant decided to walk forward and find out for himself, and as he met the leading tank he tapped on the visor with a couple of maps he held in his hand. The tank stopped, and to his horror a couple of German heads popped out of the flaps! He turned and ran like a hare 300 yards down the road, with the Germans shooting at him with all they had.

The burst of fire had warned the British tanks of the enemy's proximity, and a heavy pitched battle ensued at

Ten Tanks less than 300 yards'
Against range between the ten
Five small British tanks and
five big German ones.

For ten minutes violent fighting continued at this point-blank range, with tanks on each side shooting at gun flashes from the other side. Finally, the British tanks dropped a smoke candle, which caused a lull for a couple of minutes, and then fighting was resumed with greater intensity.

Luckily for the British, because by this time ammunition was running low, the Germans decided that they had had enough, and lumbered away into the darkness.

By this time it was 10 o'clock, and in the absence of definite orders the tank commanders were instructed to withdraw, and started their way back to Vimy. They returned across country, passing a wood full of burning German vehicles, and after crossing the River Scarpe at Anzin they reached their encampment in the Bois de la Folie just as dawn was breaking.

Next we have the story of an artillery engagement. It concerns a regiment of the Royal Artillery which, on Sunday May 26, received orders to proceed to Wytschaete—"White Sheet" to soldiers of 1914-1918—in Belgium. The regiment had hardly returned to its billets at La Marquette, and a portion of the gun troops had not yet returned from Pont-à-Marc. It was decided, however, to send all the regimental headquarter groups to a rendezvous in the woods on the other side of the village.

The second-in-command went on ahead to reconnoitre suitable "hides" and the best route in for the guns.

The R.A. at Although the column
Wytschaete was continually held up
by refugees, the regi-
ment was safely hidden
and the reconnaissance carried out.
Throughout the deployment enemy
bombers were active. The second-in-
command's rendezvous and regimental
headquarters "hide" were bombed but
suffered no casualties.

The infantry at this time were holding a line along the Ypres-Commines Canal,

thence along the railway line north of the canal to a point where the railway crossed the canal, and so on to Ypres itself. The patrols for their part were well forward, the idea being to withdraw to the canal line as soon as contact had been made with the enemy. This was carried out according to plan.

After one quiet day things began to liven up. The enemy attacked in force, and the artillery regiment fired continually on troop concentrations and trench-mortars. Attempts were also made to locate a battery which had proved most troublesome to our infantry. The situation gradually deteriorated. Observation-post lines were cut and wireless communications jammed. At one time it seemed that the lines on both flanks had gone, but the infantry brigadier went round all his battalions and the line was again stabilized. Many of the infantry who had fallen back on the gun positions re-formed and went forward. Odd rifles abandoned by wounded men were collected at the gun positions for future use.

The problem of communication remained. It was decided to send one officer from each battery forward into the line to establish contact with the forward company headquarters and direct fire. One officer went forward in the regiment's sole remaining armoured observation vehicle, the other on foot. At one time the latter officer was actually several hundred yards in front of the infantry. The reports received from him were invaluable in clarifying the situation.

The officer in the armoured vehicle succeeded in going about a mile before a shell burst overhead and wounded his assistant. He proceeded on foot a mile and a half, finally reaching a drive leading up to a château. Here he found a company of Royal Scots Fusiliers practically surrounded, and so, under heavy fire from three sides, he made his way back with the intention of calling for battery fire. But it seemed certain that the company of Royal Scots Fusiliers could not escape being surrounded, and in fact very few of these men did get back. Nevertheless, all possible support was given to them, but the difficulty of maintaining communication made observed fire almost impossible, and it remained for regimental headquarters, battery command posts, and troop command posts to use their own initiative in deciding targets.

Enemy shelling, which had been continuous all the day, increased after nightfall, and it became obvious that a further attack was pending. The situation as regards our own infantry remained obscure. The commanding

officer gave orders to troop commanders to order individual gun control at their own discretion.

A troop near Saint Eloi supporting the left flank was able, through telephonic communication with the Northamptons and a Manchesters' machine-gun company, to prevent a break-through on the left of the line. An officer of this troop, having spent a day at the observation post, knew the area well, and under his direction a line was laid out to the Northamptons and Manchesters, who were then able to call for fire whenever it was needed. On more than one occasion battery fire was put down.

In the small hours the guns were firing over open sights, and all spare personnel were armed with rifles and Bren guns to give every possible help to the infantry. The enemy advanced again and again to within a few hundred yards of our positions, but each time he was driven back by the artillery's guns at point-blank range and by small-arms fire. At three in the morning things quietened down, though there was intermittent machine-gun and shell fire, and an hour later orders were received to occupy positions near Kemmel.

The Germans attacked again at 4.30 a.m. All troops except the most advanced were safely withdrawn. The most advanced troop, however, owing to the **Saving the**
boggy state of the **Guns**
ground, were compelled

to winch their guns out, one by one—a two-hour task. Two guns had been removed and were on the road, and the other two were being winched out, when suddenly the enemy appeared over the ridge. The troop commander ordered that the two remaining guns should be rendered useless, and the first two guns were immediately sent off to the rear under heavy fire. The sergeant detailed to remove the firing-pins of the guns was severely wounded, but was rescued after a counter-attack by the infantry.

The counter-attack began at midday, when reinforcements arrived in the form of an infantry brigade. They deployed in front of the gun positions where the line had for a time been stabilized. They counter-attacked and the line was restored. Many times during the anxious hours at Wytschaete the line looked like going. The infantry was heavily outnumbered and continually subjected to machine-gun fire, trench-mortar fire and dive-bombing. All ranks had been many days and nights without sleep, yet when the order to withdraw was given, many a man was at a loss to understand the reason for it.



WYTSCHAETE AGAIN THE SCENE OF BRITISH ACTION

In this page are seen men of British regiments which in May, 1940, took part in the engagements around Wytschaete (top). Left, men of the Manchester Regiment with machine-guns during Divisional exercises in France. Right, Bren gunners of the Royal Scots Fusiliers. Below, a gun of the Royal Artillery being moved by armoured tractor up the line. The map shows the line of withdrawal upon Kemmel of the British troops in action between Wytschaete and Ypres.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright; A. J. Insall, Copyright A.P.; Map specially drawn for THE SECOND GREAT WAR by Felix Gardon



'THE MIRACLE OF DELIVERANCE'

We make no apology for reproducing almost the whole of Mr. Churchill's moving statement in the House of Commons on June 4, 1940, when he revealed in full the history, tragic but sublime, of the withdrawal of the British Expeditionary Force to Dunkirk and its subsequent evacuation in the teeth of enemy opposition.

FROM the moment that the French defences at Sedan and on the Meuse were broken at the end of the second week of May only a rapid retreat to Amiens and the south could have saved the British and French armies who had entered Belgium at the appeal of the Belgian King. However, this strategic fact was not immediately realized. The French High Command hoped they would be able to close the gap, and the armies of the north were under their orders. Moreover, a retirement of this kind would have involved almost certainly the destruction of the fine Belgian Army of over 20 divisions and the abandonment of the whole of Belgium.

Therefore, when the force and scope of the German penetration was realized and when the new French Generalissimo, Gen. Weygand, assumed command in place of Gen. Gamelin, an effort was made by the French and British armies in Belgium to occupy and hold the right hand of the Belgians and to give their own right hand to a newly-created French army, which was to have advanced across the Somme in great strength.

However, the German eruption swept like a sharp scythe stroke around the right and rear of the armies of the North. A force of eight or nine armoured divisions, each of about 400 armoured vehicles of different kinds carefully assorted to be complementary and divisible into self-contained units, cut off all communications between us and the main French armies. It severed our own communications for food and ammunition, which ran first to Amiens and afterwards through Abbeville, and it sheared its way up the coast to Boulogne and Calais, and almost to Dunkirk.

Behind this armoured and mechanized onslaught came a number of German divisions in lorries, and behind them again there plodded, comparatively slowly, the dull brute mass of the ordinary German Army and German people always so ready to trample down in other lands the liberties and comforts they have never known in their own.

I have said that this vast armoured scythe stroke almost reached Dunkirk. Boulogne and Calais were the centres of desperate fighting. The Guards defended Boulogne for a while and were then withdrawn by orders from this country.

Glorious Defence of Calais

THE Rifle Brigade, the 60th Rifles and the Queen Victoria's Rifles, with a battalion of British tanks and 1,000 Frenchmen—in all about 4,000 strong—defended Calais to the last. The British Brigadier was given an hour to surrender. He spurned the offer, and four days of intense street fighting passed before a silence reigned over Calais which marked the end of a memorable resistance. Only 30 unwounded survivors were brought off by the Navy, and we do not know the fate of their comrades. Their sacrifice was not, however, in vain. At least two armoured divisions, which otherwise would have been turned against the British Expeditionary Force, had to be sent there to overcome them. They added another page to the glories of the Light Division, and the time gained enabled the Gravelines waterline to be flooded and held by the French troops, and thus it was that the port of Dunkirk was kept open.

When it was found impossible for the armies of the north to re-open their communications through Amiens for the main French armies, only one choice remained. It seemed, indeed, forlorn.

The Belgian, British and French armies were almost surrounded; their sole line of retreat was a single port and its neighbouring beaches. They were pressed on every side by heavy attacks and far outnumbered in the air. . . .

Another blow, which might have proved fatal, was to fall. The King of the Belgians had called upon us to come to his aid. Had not this ruler and his Government severed themselves from the Allies who rescued their country from ex-

inction in the last war, had they not sought refuge in what proved a fatal neutrality, the British and French armies might well at the very outset have saved not only Belgium, but perhaps even Poland. Yet at the last moment, when Belgium was already invaded, the King of the Belgians called upon us to come to his aid, and even at the last moment we came. He and his brave and efficient Belgian army, nearly half a million strong, guarded our eastern flank, and thus kept open our only line of retreat to the sea.

Suddenly, without any prior consultation, with the least possible notice, without the advice of his Ministers, and upon his own personal act, he sent a plenipotentiary to the German Command, surrendered his Army, and exposed our flank and means of retreat. . . .

Armies' Struggle to Reach Dunkirk

THE surrender of the Belgian Army compelled the British at the shortest notice to cover the flank to the sea of more than 30 miles in length, otherwise it would have shared the fate to which King Leopold had condemned the finest army his country had ever formed. One has only to look at the map to realize that contact was lost inevitably between the British and two out of three corps forming the French Army who were still much farther from the coast than we were, and how it seemed impossible that any large number of Allied troops could reach the coast.

The enemy attacked in great strength on all sides, and their main power—the power of their far more numerous air force—was thrown into the battle or concentrated upon Dunkirk and the beaches.

Pressing in on the narrow exit, both from the east and west, the enemy began to fire with cannon along the beaches by which alone shipping could approach or depart. They sowed magnetic mines in the channels and the seas; they sent repeated waves of hostile aircraft, sometimes more than 100 strong in one formation, to cast their bombs upon the single pier that remained and on the sand dunes amid which the troops as they arrived took shelter. Their U-boats, one of which was sunk, and their motor launches, took their toll of the vast traffic that now began.

For four or five days an intense struggle raged. Their armoured divisions, or what was left of them, together with great masses of German artillery and infantry, hurled themselves in vain upon the ever-narrowing and contracting appendix upon which the French and British armies fought.

Meanwhile, the Royal Navy, with the willing help of countless merchant seamen and a host of volunteers, strained every nerve to embark the British and Allied troops. Over 220 light warships and more than 650 other vessels were engaged. They had to operate upon a difficult coast, and often under adverse weather conditions and under an almost ceaseless hail of bombs and increasing concentrations of artillery fire. Nor were the seas themselves free from mines or torpedoes.

Courage and Devotion of Rescuers

IT was in conditions such as these that our men carried on with little or no rest for days and nights, making trip after trip across the dangerous waters. The numbers they have brought back are the measure of their devotion and courage.

Meanwhile, the R.A.F., which had already been intervening in the battle so far as its range would allow, now used part of its main Metropolitan fighter strength to strike at the German bombers and at the fighters which in large numbers protected them. This struggle was protracted and fierce.

But now suddenly the scene is clear. The crash of the thunder has for the moment—but only for the moment—died away. The miracle of deliverance, achieved by valour, by perseverance, by perfect discipline, by faultless service, by resource, by skill, by unconquerable fidelity, is manifest to us all.

DRAMATIC STORY OF THE GREAT RETREAT

The enemy was hurled back by the retreating British and French troops. He was so roughly handled that he did not dare molest the departing armies. The Air Force decisively defeated the main strength of the German Air Force and inflicted upon them a loss of at least four to one. The Navy, using nearly 1,000 ships of all kinds, took over 335,000 men, French and British, out of the jaws of death and shame back to their native land and to the tasks which lie immediately before them.

R.A.F. Win a Decisive Victory

WE must be careful not to assign to this deliverance the attributes of a victory. Wars are not won by evacuations. But there *was* a victory inside this deliverance which should be noted. It was gained by the Air Force.

Many of our soldiers coming back have not seen the Air Force at work. They only saw the German bombers which escaped their protective attack. They underrate the achievements of the British Air Force. This was a great trial of strength between the British and the German air forces. Can you conceive a greater object for the power of Germany in the air than to make evacuation from these beaches impossible and to sink all the ships which were displayed, almost to the number of a thousand, in the waters outside? Could there have been an objective of greater military importance or of greater significance for the whole purposes of war than this?

They tried hard, and they were beaten back. They were frustrated in their attack. We got the Army away, and they have paid fourfold for any loss they have inflicted. Every day formations of German aeroplanes—and we know this is a very brave race—have turned on several occasions from an attack of one-fourth of their number of the Royal Air Force and dispersed in different directions. Twelve aeroplanes have been hunted by two. One aeroplane was driven into the water and cast away by the mere charge of a British aeroplane which had no more ammunition. All our types and all our pilots have been vindicated. The Hurricane, Spitfire and the new Defiant all have been vindicated as superior to what they have to face.

When we consider how much greater would be our advantages in defending the air above this island against an overseas attack, I must say that I find these facts a sure basis upon which practical and reassuring thoughts may rest. . . .

May it not also be that the cause of civilization itself will be defended by the skill and vision of a few thousand airmen? There never has been, I suppose, in all the history of the world, such an opportunity for youth. The Knights of the Round Table, the Crusaders—they all fall back into the prosaic days, not only distant but prosaic, to these young men going forth every morning to guard their native land and all we stand for—those men going forward, in their hands the instruments of colossal and shattering power, of whom it can be said: "Every morn brought forth a noble chance and every chance brought forth a noble deed."

British Losses of Equipment

I RETURN to the Army. In the long series of very fierce battles, now on this front and now on that, fighting on three fronts at once, battles fought by two or three divisions against an equal or somewhat larger number of the enemy and fought very fiercely on the old ground so many of us knew so well—in these battles our losses in men have exceeded 30,000 killed, wounded and missing. . . .

We have lost nearly 1,000 guns, all the transport, and all the armoured vehicles that were with the Army in the north. This loss will impose a further delay on the expansion of our military strength. . . . How long it will last depends on the exertions which we make in this island. An effort the like of which has never been seen in our records is now being made. Work is proceeding everywhere night and day, Sundays and weekdays. Capital and labour have cast aside their interests, rights, and customs to put them into the common stock. Already the flow of munitions has leaped forward. There is no reason why we should not, in a few months, overtake the sudden and serious loss that has come upon us without retarding the development of our general programme. Nevertheless, our thankfulness at the escape of our Army, and of

many men whose loved ones have passed through an agonizing week, must not blind us to the fact that what has happened in France and Belgium is a colossal military disaster. The French Army has been weakened. The Belgian Army has been lost. A large part of those fortified lines on which so much faith had been reposed has gone. Many valuable mining districts and factories have passed into the enemy's possession. The whole of the Channel ports are in his hands, with all the strategic consequences that follow from that. We must expect another blow to be struck almost immediately at us or the French. We are told that Herr Hitler has a plan for invading the British Isles. This has often been thought of before. When Napoleon lay at Boulogne for a year with his flat-bottomed boats and his Grand Army, he was told by someone: "There are bitter weeds in England."

There are certainly a good number more of them since the B.E.F. returned. The whole question of home defence against invasion is, of course, powerfully affected by the fact that we have for the time being in this island incomparably more powerful military forces than we have ever had.

But this will not continue. We shall not be content with a defensive war. We have our duty to our Allies. We have to reconstitute and build up the B.E.F. once again under its gallant Commander-in-Chief, Lord Gort.

All this is in train. But in the interval we must put our defences in this island into such a high state of organization that fewest possible numbers will be required to give effective security, and that the largest possible potential of offensive effort may be realized. On this we are now engaged. . . .

Chances For and Against Invasion

THERE has never been a period in all these long centuries in which an absolute guarantee against invasion, still less against serious raids, could have been given to our people. In the days of Napoleon the same wind that would have carried his transports across the Channel might have driven away the blockading fleet.

There was always a chance, and it is that chance which has excited and befooled the imaginations of many Continental tyrants. We are assured that novel methods will be adopted, and when we see the originality of malice and the ingenuity of aggression which our enemy displays we may certainly prepare ourselves for every kind of novel strategy and every kind of brutal and treacherous manoeuvre. I think no idea is so outlandish that it should not be considered and viewed with a searching but I hope also with a steady eye. One must never forget the solid assurance of sea power and those which belong to air power if it can be locally exercised.

I have myself full confidence that if all do their duty and nothing is neglected and if the best arrangements are made, as they are being made, we shall prove ourselves once again able to defend our island home, ride out the storms of war, and outlive the menace of tyranny if necessary for years, if necessary alone. At any rate, that is what we are trying to do. That is the resolve of the Government, every man of them. It is the will of Parliament and of the nation.

The British Empire with the French Republic, linked together in their cause and in their need, will defend to the death their native soil, aiding each other like good comrades to the utmost of their strength, even though large tracts of Europe and many old and famous States have fallen or may fall into the grip of the Gestapo and all the odious apparatus of Nazi rule.

'We Shall Never Surrender'

WE cannot flag or fail. We shall go on to the end. We shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air. We shall defend our island whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, in the fields, in the streets, and in the hills.

We shall never surrender, and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, will carry on the struggle until in God's good time the New World, with all its power and might, sets forth to the liberation and rescue of the Old.

'NO BRAVER EPIC IN ALL OUR ANNALS!'

The first official information of the evacuation from Dunkirk was given in a dramatic broadcast by Mr. Anthony Eden, War Minister, on June 2, 1940. We give below the bulk of his speech, and also two tributes, made by King George and the Admiralty, to the courage, devotion and resource of the Services which made this evacuation possible.

MR. ANTHONY EDEN, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR, IN A BROADCAST TALK, JUNE, 2, 1940:

IN the Battle of the Ports which has been raging for the past three weeks, Germany has made great strategical gains. The loss to us in equipment and in material has been heavy, but there is now another side to this picture.

The bulk of the B.E.F. has been saved, and, quite apart from what the French have done for their own forces, we have been able to bring tens of thousands of our French Allies off with our own men from Dunkirk. Nor is the effort ended. Four days ago not one of us would have dared to hope that the isolated Allied Armies could have fought their way through the bottle-neck to the coast.

It is the spirit of the B.E.F. that has won through. These men have marched hundreds of miles; they have fought countless actions with an enemy that hemmed them in and pressed upon them from three sides. The German High Command proudly announced that they were surrounded. They have fought their way out. How have they achieved the seemingly impossible?

Man for man the British troops have proved themselves superior to the Germans wherever they have met them. All accounts show that the B.E.F. took a toll of the enemy greatly in excess of that suffered by themselves. . . .

Let me now state the sequence of events. At the call of the King of the Belgians, the British Expeditionary Force advanced into Belgium and took up its position on the River Dyle. The advance lasted several days. Through events it could not control our Army had to come back in less than half that time. It did so with little confusion and with few losses. Seventy-five miles forward, a fight at the end of the advance, and seventy-five miles back, fighting all the way, all in the space of ten days.

That was the first phase of the Battle of the Ports and it was brilliantly executed. I have heard of one division which did not lose a single straggler on that 150-mile march. . . .

And so the B.E.F. found itself back on the Scheldt with its strength in men and material almost intact. But meanwhile the German mechanized columns were pouring through the gap to the south, advancing across our lines of communication, biting even deeper into our back areas. Desperate efforts were made to stem the tide. Units who had been sent to France to supply some of the much-needed labour behind the lines were thrown into the fight and acquitted themselves splendidly. Others were sent to hold the Channel ports in an effort to keep open communications with the British Expeditionary Force.

At Calais a small Allied force put up a magnificent resistance. In spite of repeated attacks by the enemy, and of continuous air and artillery bombardment, the garrison held out for several days. A summons to surrender was rejected by the British commander. His troops fought on. We now know, from certain information which we have received, that this gallant defence drew off powerful mechanized forces which must otherwise have been free to attack the flank of the British Expeditionary Force, at that time dangerously exposed.

While these events were taking place near our own shores, the Expeditionary Force was fighting for its life in its retreat on Dunkirk. Mechanized forces already encircled its western flank, and the collapse of the Belgian Army left open a wide gap between its eastern flank and the sea. There was no time to be lost. Divisions were moved rapidly to hold the flanks, and heavy fighting took place while the enemy tried desperately to cut off the Allied armies from the only base which was left to them. Some troops marched thirty-five miles in twenty-four hours.

The British brigades on the flanks stood firm, despite the enormously extended frontage they had now to defend. At one time the Expeditionary Force of nine divisions were holding a front of eighty miles. They held on and fought back.

On the west British troops defended the narrowing gap to the sea. Day after day the battle continued. At the end of it they had fought themselves to a standstill, but held their ground, and by doing so had enabled the remainder of the Expeditionary Force to get clear. On the east, corps artillery coming into action against the enemy massing for attack inflicted such heavy casualties that the attack never developed.

The stories of individual exploits at this time are legion. . . . But the triumph is not the triumph of individuals, however gallant. It is the triumph of an army. There is no braver epic in all our annals.

Here, then, is the story of the Battle of the Ports. From the moment of the collapse of the Belgian Army there was only one course left to the Allied Armies—to hold a line round Dunkirk, the only port that remained, and to embark as many men as possible before their rearguards were overwhelmed. Thanks to the magnificent and untiring co-operation of the Allied Navies and Air Forces we have been able to embark and save more than four-fifths of that B.E.F. which the Germans claimed were surrounded. . . . The British Expeditionary Force still exists, not as a handful of fugitives, but as a body of seasoned veterans. The vital weapon of any army is its spirit. Ours has been tried and tempered in the furnace. It has not been found wanting. It is this refusal to accept defeat that is the guarantee of final victory.

Our duty in this country is plain. We must make good our losses, and we must win the war. We need more 'planes, more tanks, more guns. The people of this country must work as never before. We must show the same qualities, the same discipline and the same self-sacrifice at home as the B.E.F. have shown in the field.

The nation honours with proud reverence those who fell that their comrades might win through. The innumerable actions, the countless deeds of the last week cannot all be recorded now. Each action will have its place in history. Soldiers, sailors, airmen who gave their lives to help—theirs is an immortal memory. Their spirit must be our banner; their sacrifice our spur.

KING GEORGE IN A MESSAGE TO THE PRIME MINISTER, JUNE 3, 1940:

I WISH to express my admiration of the outstanding skill and bravery shown by the three Services and the Merchant Navy in the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from Northern France. So difficult an operation was only made possible by brilliant leadership and the indomitable spirit among all ranks of the Force.

The measure of its success—greater than we had dared to hope—was due to the unfailing support of the Royal Air Force and, in the final stages, the tireless efforts of naval units of every kind.

While we acclaim this great feat, in which our French Allies, too, have played so important a part, we think with heartfelt sympathy of the loss and sufferings of those brave men whose self-sacrifice has turned disaster into triumph.

THE BOARD OF ADMIRALTY IN A SIGNAL SENT OUT JUNE 4:

THE Board of Admiralty congratulates all concerned in the successful evacuation of the B.E.F. and the soldiers of the Allied armies from the Dunkirk area.

Their lordships appreciate the splendid endurance with which all ships and personnel faced the continuous attack of enemy aircraft and the physical strain imposed by long hours of arduous work in narrow waters over many days.

Their lordships also realize that success was only rendered possible by the great effort made by all shore establishments, and in particular by the Dover Command, who were responsible for the organization and direction of this difficult operation.

HEROIC DEFENCE OF BOULOGNE & CALAIS DELAYS NAZI ONSLAUGHT ON THE B.E.F.

Menace to the Channel Ports—British Guards and Frenchmen Hold out in Boulogne—British Forces Withdrawn: A Naval Story—Grim Drama at Calais—London Territorials at Bay—No Surrender—Vice-Admiral Somerville's Tribute—The 60th Rifles and the Rifle Brigade—Silence Falls on Calais

(The full story of Calais Force is told in Chapter 150)

BEFORE details were published of the fierce fighting which involved the Channel ports, there were signs and portents: the Navy was unusually active; and certainly there had never been heard so many of our fighters and bombers passing overhead, to and fro, across the Channel. Many of them, in fact, were evacuating their bases in north-eastern France. Others were intensifying the offensive defensive bombing raids that were to hamper the enemy's designs against our retreating armies. The blitzkrieg launched on the Low Countries had flooded into northern France and, still north of the Somme, had swirled round to the Artois coast.

On May 24 the German forces had occupied Boulogne. A valiant stand by French rearguards had covered the

evacuation on the previous day of the Guards, by direct orders from England, and in the old Citadel the Frenchmen fought on a day or two longer. But their final stand, supported by British and French naval units, was only to gain a little more time to add to that which the fierce, brief British resistance had just secured. It was seen that Boulogne had really gone. Watchers from the cliffs of England observed for several days the pall of smoke that hung above the blazing stores and buildings of the wrecked port. They

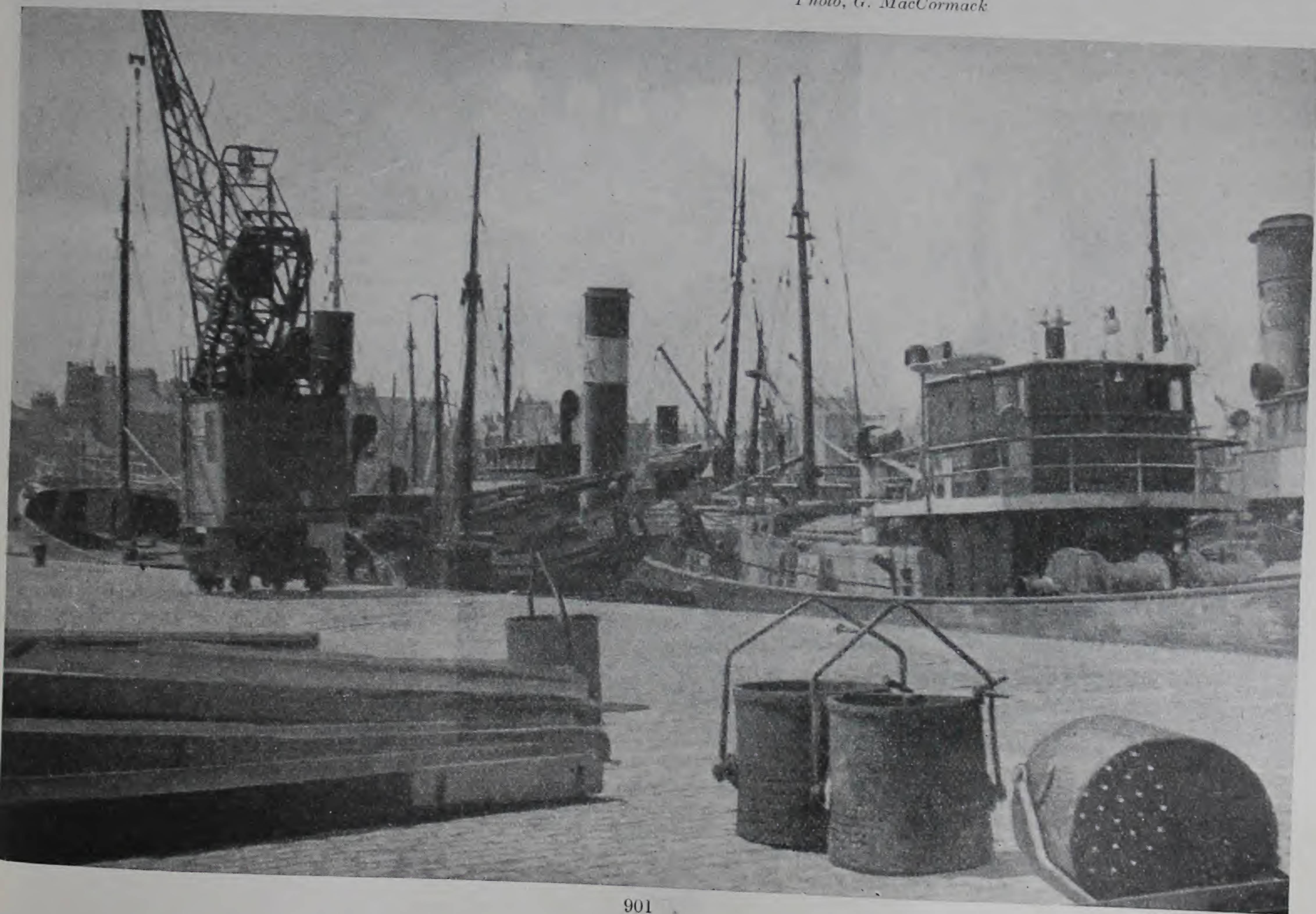
felt, even when they could not hear, the unending vibrations of gunfire and of bomb explosions all along the French coast from Boulogne to Dunkirk, and at night the gloom over the sea was torn by streaks and flashes of light.

Vice-Admiral Bertram Home Ramsay, commander of the naval forces operating from Dover, has described how the British troops were got away from Boulogne on the night of May 23-24. When it was mooted that the B.E.F. might have to fall back on the Channel ports, the question of evacuation was

CAPTURED BY NAZIS: WRECKED BY R.A.F.

The British troops who made so gallant a stand at Boulogne were got away from the town on the night of May 23-24, 1940. But although the Germans captured the port, repeated raids by the R.A.F. made it well-nigh unusable. Below is a corner of the Bassin Chanzy at Boulogne, photographed shortly before the outbreak of war.

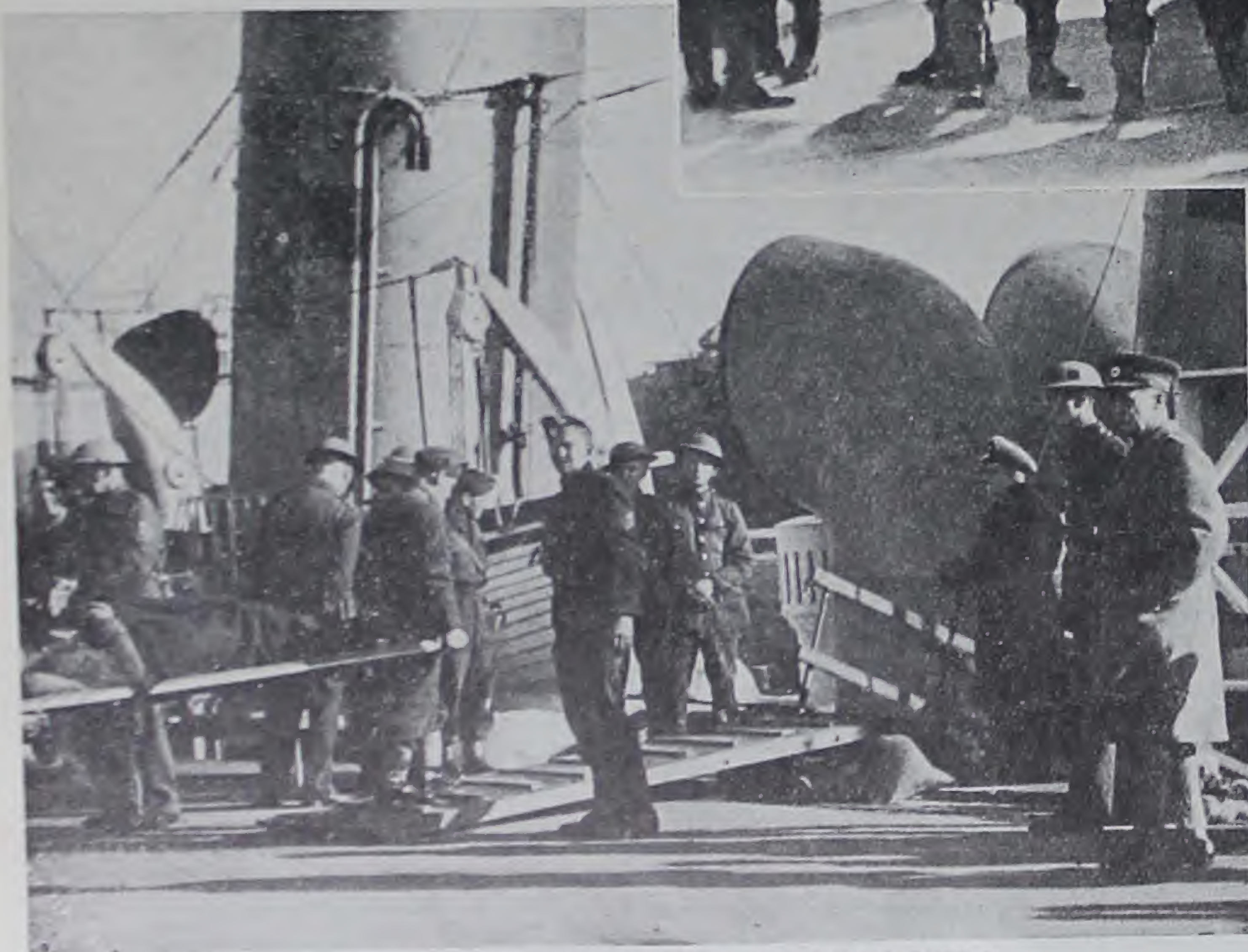
Photo, G. MacCormack





discussed, and it then did not seem too bad, as there were about five ports available. Vice-Admiral Ramsay went on:

"Our first job was to evacuate Boulogne, and this was done entirely by six destroyers. . . . They brought off 4,600 soldiers without any preparation, under fire from shore batteries, heavy aerial attacks, and machine-guns and snipers at every point. The captain in charge of the flotilla was sniped and shot on his bridge. That was the end of Boulogne."



WOMEN AND WOUNDED AT BOULOGNE

After an heroic stand at Boulogne the British troops there were withdrawn by direct orders from England. Top, women ambulance drivers boarding a British vessel at Boulogne; right, British wounded being taken from motor ambulances on the quay; below, stretcher cases being carried on to a hospital ship.

From a War Office Official Film

A naval eye witness of the withdrawal said that the Germans were all round the docks at a distance of about 400 yards; snipers had crept to within fifty yards. Fire from field guns and machine-guns continued all the time, and bombing from the air went on ceaselessly. The daring and courage of the troops were magnificent under a tornado of fire.

Another naval officer present said that the soldiers "stood like rocks."

While this grim drama was being enacted at Boulogne, other Allied forces were fighting for existence at the key port of Calais. On May 30 the War Office made the following announcement:

"Last week, a small British force was sent to hold Calais and to attempt to maintain communications with the B.E.F. Finding itself unable to carry out the latter task, in face of strong enemy mechanized forces, it concentrated on the defence of Calais.

"In spite of repeated attacks by the enemy and of continuous air and artillery bombardment, the garrison held out for several days. By its refusal to surrender it contained a large number of the enemy and was of invaluable assistance to the main

body of the B.E.F. in its withdrawal on Dunkirk. This action will count among the most heroic deeds in the annals of the British Army."

At Calais the British units of the Allied force were a battalion each of the Rifle Brigade, the Queen Victoria Rifles, the 60th Rifles, and the Royal Tank Regiment, together with a body of men from searchlight batteries of the Royal Artillery. Allied troops here were on the defensive, and from May 24 began to draw in their thinly-held lines around the town. Skilfully the withdrawal was made to inner lines and then to strong points well inside the town, the disciplined skilled and valour of the Territorials equalling the finest records of the Regular Army. The fighting soon was street by street and house by house.

"They fought," said the German communiqué, "with courage and desperation. . . . In attacks by German infantry, firing came from every window. House by



ST. QUENTIN AGAIN SEES GERMAN TROOPS

Here, in May, 1940, Nazi motorized units are entering the French town of St. Quentin, on the Somme. St. Quentin had been the scene of heavy fighting during the German and Allied offensives of March and October, 1918, respectively. After the German occupation of the city in 1940 it was visited by Hitler.

Photo, Associated Press



BLITZKRIEG SEEN FROM THE GERMAN SIDE

The photographs in this page are taken from the German official army paper "Die Wehrmacht." The one above shows German troops advancing in open formation across the fields of Northern France. Below, a German motor-cycle column, its progress marked by clouds of dust, roars along the roads of France

Photos, "Die Wehrmacht," Berlin





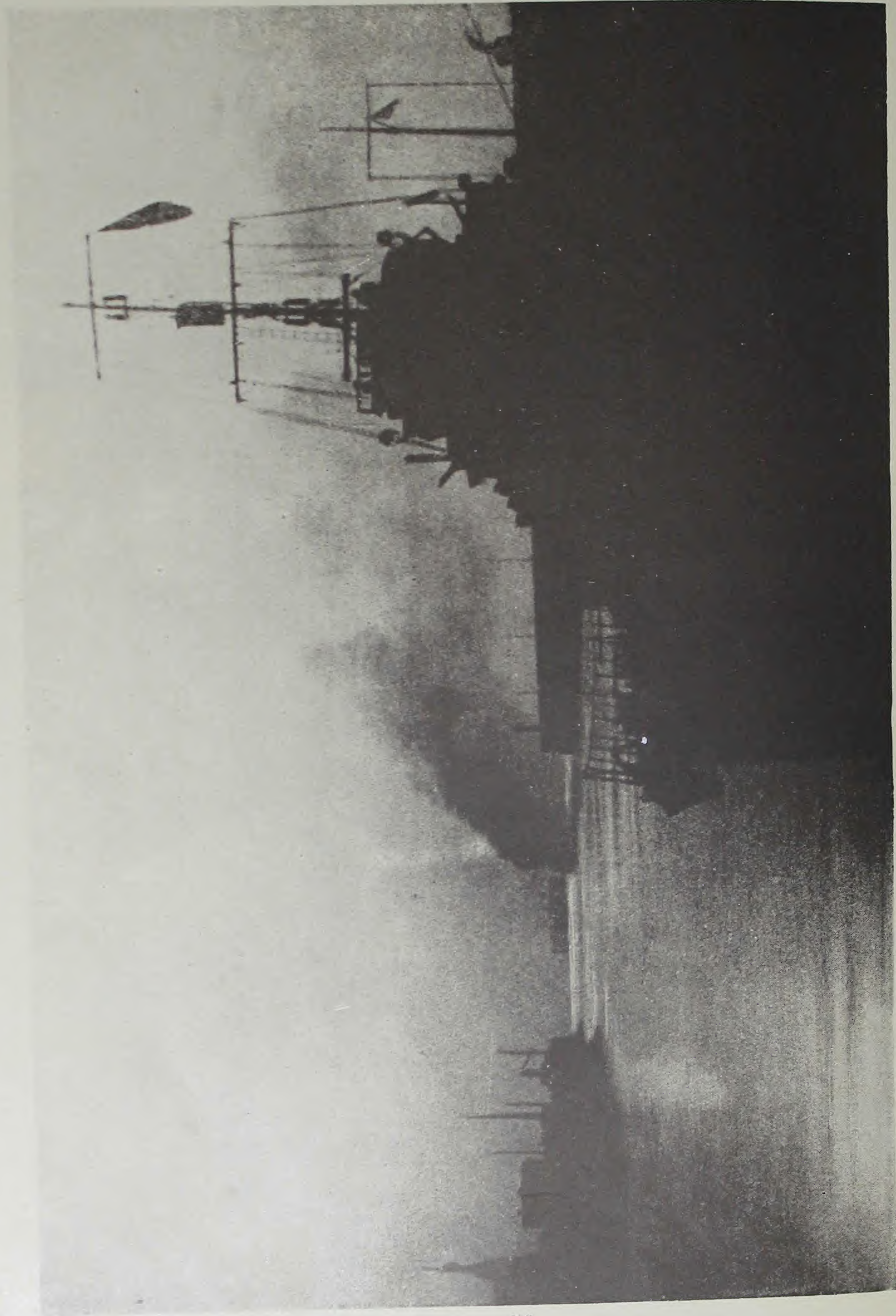
CALAIS BY NIGHT: BOULOGNE BY DAY

The night photograph above was taken from the Kent coast during the last week-end in May, 1940. It shows the glow from huge fires in the direction of Calais. In the photo below, clouds of smoke can be seen rising from the heavily bombarded port of Boulogne. This photograph was taken by an R.A.F. reconnaissance machine about the same period.

Photos, "News Chronicle"; British Official; Crown Copyright

2





MAGNIFICENT WORK BY THE ROYAL NAVY—THE EVACUATION OF BOULOGNE

By May 23, 1940, Boulogne was so heavily beset by the land and air forces of the enemy that the decision was taken to withdraw the British defenders of the town. Between 5.30 p.m. and 3 a.m. on May 24 the six destroyers detailed for this perilous task took off 4,600 soldiers. This unique photograph, taken by an officer, under German shell-fire, was obtained by the light of a bursting shell. He said: "It shows a destroyer going out stern first, burning, but with all guns blazing; and the destroyer which came in ahead of the other coming in to the jetty to take us off, also firing over our heads at Germans up on the right."

house had to be conquered. The Englishmen had made every house a fortress."

Three thousand British troops with about one thousand French fought to the last against great odds merely to gain time. The London Territorials' share of glory was underlined when it became known that Brigadier Nicholson, commanding officer of the Queen Victoria's Rifles, was in command of the entire defence force. The Queen Victoria's Rifles was a London Territorial regiment recruited largely from men of the big drapery stores, the headquarters of the unit being in the West End. The battalion that took part in the defence of Calais had been turned into a mobile motor-cycle unit, early in 1939, as part of the scheme for doubling the Territorial Army. They were in camp for training when the call came for more men to stem the enemy's onrush through France, and were sent across the Channel as an infantry battalion, without their motor-cycles. On Sunday, May 26, about 8 a.m., the Germans gave the Brigadier

an hour in which to surrender. His reply, as quoted by the German communiqué, was "The answer is 'No'!" The bombardment from the German guns and 'planes now intensified. Before the end of the afternoon most of the town and the docks were smashed and burning, but two extra German armoured divisions, which the enemy had intended for the drive towards Dunkirk, were being kept busy at Calais. Just before this final phase, when the garrison retired into the ancient Citadel, a British destroyer had entered the port and succeeded in landing a reconnaissance party, including Vice-Admiral Somerville, who said in a broadcast:

"I went over at night to Calais in one of our destroyers, when the garrison was hard pressed, was surrounded by superior forces, but was holding on grimly. As we made fast alongside the quay we came under heavy fire.

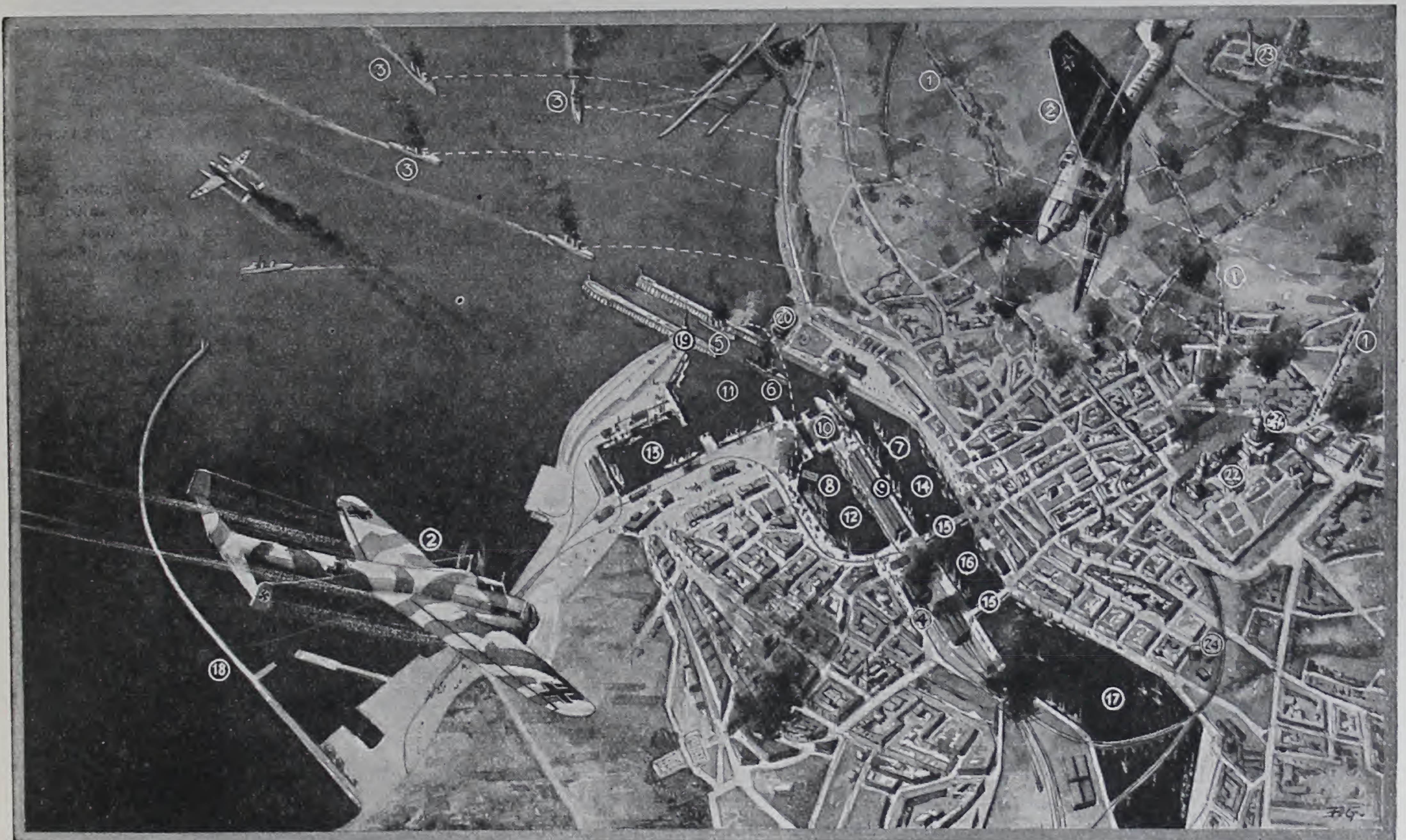
"With shells bursting alongside and on the quay the captain gave the order to cast off the wires, and with coolness and precision backed his ship clear of this unhealthy berth and brought her alongside at a spot which was less exposed to fire. Every order he gave



SAVED BOULOGNE HEROES

Vice-Admiral Bertram Ramsay, above, organized the evacuation of British troops from Boulogne on the night of May 23-24, 1940. Six destroyers brought off 4,600 men under heavy fire and bombardment.

Photo, "Daily Mirror"



BOULOGNE HARBOUR

The pictorial plan above shows the French port of Boulogne, which was finally occupied by the Germans on May 26, 1940, after some days of fierce fighting by Allied troops. The remaining British troops were evacuated by the Navy, and from then onwards the port was rendered almost unusable for the Nazis by the continuous raids of the R.A.F.

Specially drawn for THE SECOND GREAT WAR by Félix Gardon

REFERENCE

- ① German Columns closing in on town ② Enemy Bombers
- ③ French & British destroyers shelling north of town
- ④ Central Railway Station under shell-fire ⑤ Destroyer shelling Crane
- ⑥ Destroyer leaving Outer Port stern first ⑦ Drifter ready to evacuate troops
- ⑧ Floating Dock ⑨ Landing Stage ⑩ Maritime Station ⑪ Outer Port ⑫ Basin
- ⑬ Loubet Basin ⑭ Port de Marée ⑮ Swing Bridges ⑯ Inner Port ⑰ River Liane
- ⑱ Carnot Mole ⑲ Britannia Statue ⑳ Casino ㉑ Church of Notre-Dame
- ㉒ Town Hall ㉓ Napoleon's Column ㉔ Gas Works



'NO SURRENDER'

Brigadier Claude Nicholson (above), with 3,000 British and 1,000 French troops, held Calais to the end, refusing to surrender to the Germans. He was eventually taken prisoner. Right, are badges of the four British regiments which held out in Calais.

Photo, Universal

was carried out faithfully and courageously, regardless of the bursting shells.

"On shore I found a brigadier—a very gallant brigadier—in command of our troops. His quiet confidence, his grim determination to hold out to the last man, was an inspiration to everyone there. No thought of surrender, no thought but to serve their country to the utmost of their endeavour and to the last man. And this they did.

"The men who have stood to their duty, under the conditions I have described, are men in the truest sense of the word."

On the morning of Monday, May 27, before the fight for the Citadel had ended and silence had fallen on Calais, R.A.F. pilots in forty Lysander 'planes flew over in three waves from a south of England aerodrome. The aircraft were each loaded with 10-gallon water containers in the bomb-rack, the containers being fitted with parachutes. The smoke of the conflagration veiled the target, but, flying very low over the Citadel walls through heavy gunfire, the airmen dropped the water and returned. Several 'planes were badly hit; one was seen to dive into the ground after its load had been delivered. Later in the morning another R.A.F. force, including some dive-bombers to harass the enemy's guns, flew over the Citadel and dropped parcels of hand-grenades and ammunition. But by next day the remnant of the garrison had been silenced.

Brigadier Claude Nicholson was taken prisoner with the remnant of his men.

Of the Brigadier his close friend, General Sir Hubert Gough, said: "Nicholson is perhaps the most brilliant officer of his standing in the British Army."

The award of the Military Cross to the Rev. Richard Newcombe Craig, announced on July 19, revealed a story of heroic devotion.

"On May 23 the Padre arrived at Calais when it was already menaced by the enemy, being under continual bombing and shell-fire. He declined to embark for England. He voluntarily established an aid post with straggler personnel near Calais Docks Station. Here, without a medical officer for three days, he organized the dressing and evacuation of some 300 wounded."

The official narrative in the "Gazette"

May 23, disembarked and sat about on the sand dunes near the docks waiting for the ship that was bringing our tanks and guns. She did not show up until the evening. It was very serious for us, because all the weapons we had were a few Bren guns, which had been kept for anti-aircraft protection. When the ship did arrive the French stevedores refused to unload her. They said they had been working forty-eight hours without food and rest. So the job was done by some sappers and our own men. They were inexperienced and it was a slow business. While they were still unloading the ship a hospital train with a large number of wounded came into Calais Station. At the request of the medical officer in charge our unloading party were turned into stretcher bearers. They carried the wounded from the train into the ship, in which most of our equipment was still lying. Orders were received that further disembarkation of material was to cease, and that the boat was to go back to England with the wounded, which it did. About 60 per cent of our vehicles, ammunition and weapons went back with it.

"On Friday (May 24) a small mixed column, using such vehicles as it could get, and about four medium tanks, was organized, and went out at dawn towards Dunkirk. They were supposed to be on reconnaissance. They had a merry little engagement with the Germans, in which two of our tanks were blown up and two men killed. They certainly killed twelve Germans.

"On Friday afternoon an order was given to man the outer lines, and this was done. There was a good deal of fighting and a lot of light-hearted sniping. At dusk we heard that large numbers of German tanks were approaching. During the

PADRE OF CALAIS

During the darkest hours of the siege the Rev. R. N. Craig (below) laboured unceasingly for the wounded. He established an aid post near the Docks Station and in three days organized the dressing and evacuation of some 300 men. For his devotion to duty he was awarded the M.C.

Photo, G.P.U.



Royal Tank Regt.



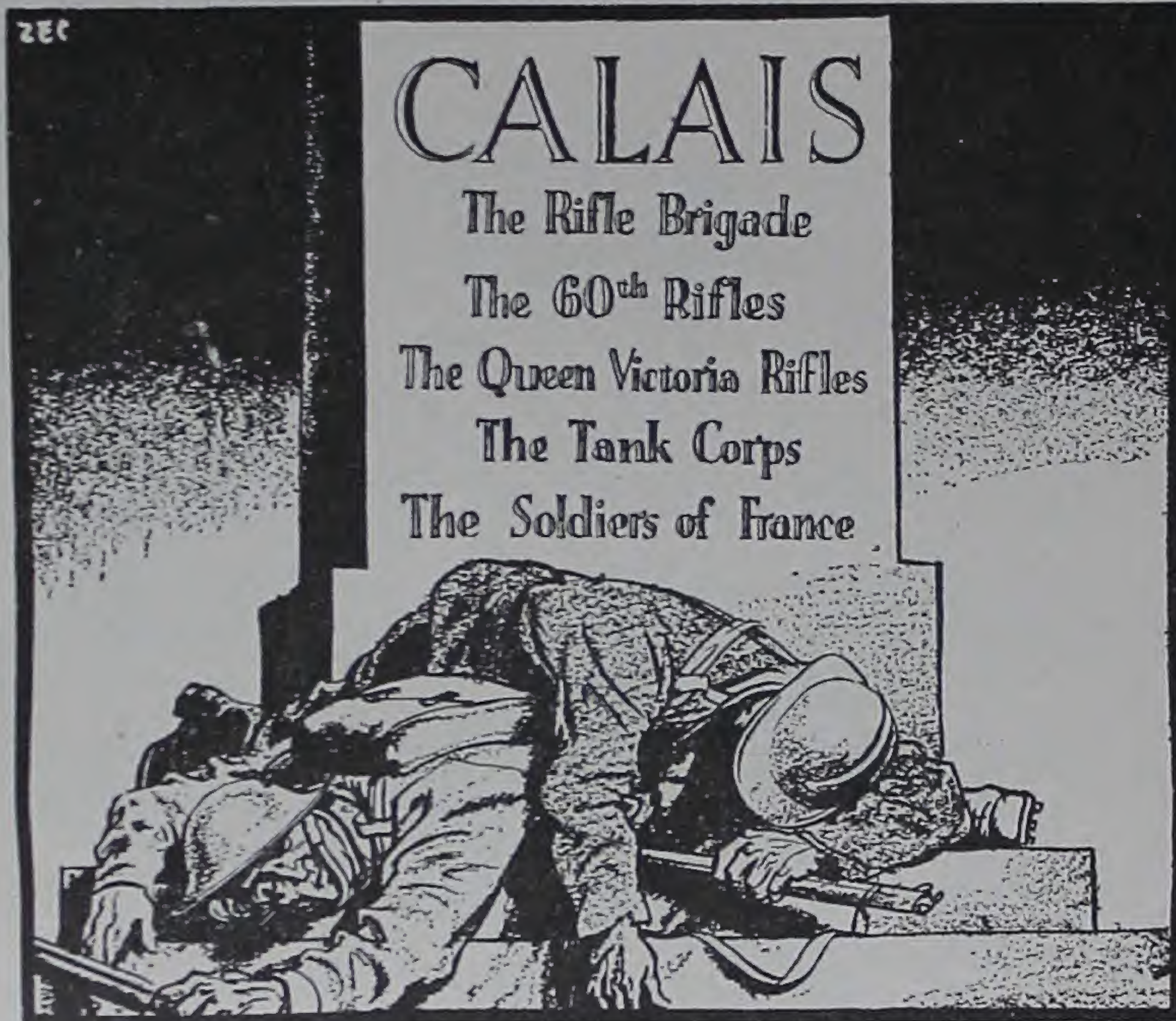
Rifle Brigade



60th. Rifles



Q. Victoria's Rifles



Their Name Liveth for Evermore!

From the cartoon by ZEC, Courtesy of "The Daily Mirror"

goes on to tell that Craig learned that six badly wounded men were lying on the dunes, under enemy sniping fire and unable to get away. Without hesitation the Padre called for four volunteers, and drove an ambulance to a spot near by; with his four helpers he crawled to the wounded men and rescued them all. Then he drove back under fire.

A story told to Lionel Crane, "Daily Express" staff reporter, by two men of one of the British units fills in some of the details in the imperishable story of the defence. Extracts are here given. One of the Tommies said:

"We got to the town in the afternoon on





REFERENCE

- ① Rifle Brigade & 60th Rifles (*Assembly position in sand dunes May 23*)
 ② Channel ③ Tidal Basin ④ West Dock ⑤ Sluicing Basins
 ⑥ Carnot Dock ⑦ Asfeld Channel ⑧ Refugees
 ⑨ Q.V.R. company guarding approaches from Dunkirk (*May 23*) ⑩ 60th Rifles patrols (*May 24*)
 ⑪ Maritime Station (*Brigade H.Q. May 24*) ⑫ Central Station ⑬ Fort Risban
 ⑭ Citadel (*Advanced Brigade H.Q. May 25*) ⑮ Dive Bombers attacking Docks

night the order was given to retire to the inner lines. There was terrific and incessant machine-gun fire. The Germans were right in the streets. During the night it was fairly quiet. At dawn (May 25) the old ramparts were shelled heavily for about twenty minutes.

"Two officers in a small car drove miles round the town. They went much farther than they were supposed to do, and when they returned they said they could see

hardly any Germans at all. Later in the day, however, we knew the enemy had come back. The main attack started from the east and south-east. Our chaps were posted all round Calais on the bridges, trying to hold the Germans back.

"They just sat smack in the middle of the road with their machine-guns in front of them and peppered away: there was nothing to protect them. Sniping from the rear and from houses all round us became very much

THE STRUGGLE FOR CALAIS

This pictorial plan of Calais shows in graphic manner where the Allied troops held out against great odds in the battle for the Channel Ports at the end of May, 1940. The numbered references on the left should be consulted in connexion with the text. (See also plan in p. 1569.)

Specially drawn for THE SECOND GREAT WAR by Félix Gardon

more intense. It was difficult to catch these snipers. We would see shots coming from a certain house, and we would dash in, only to find a French peasant reading his book or raking over his garden at the back.

"It must have been one of the strangest battles in history. While we were being driven back and fighting every inch of the way, and while German guns and 'planes

were raining down shells and bombs into the streets, there were hundreds of civilians going about their daily life as though it were a normal week-end.

"I had a windy message from one platoon saying they were surrounded, and I hurried down to see them. They had had a considerable number of casualties, and I went back to company headquarters, which was near the quay. When I got there I heard people in the next garden jabbering excitedly. . . . I looked over the wall and there were about ten Germans.

"We rushed from headquarters and drove them out of the garden with rifles and revolvers. They grabbed women and children standing in the streets and ran with them into a near-by house.

"We could not fire heavy stuff at the house while the women and children were there, and we just had to leave them."

The real enemy attack began a few hours later. A sergeant-major who was there told Mr. Crane:

"Sunday morning, breakfast time, I was issuing rations. I had the water boiling for tea when the bombing started. I had



RIFLEMEN OF CALAIS FAME

Men of the Queen Victoria's Rifles were among the small British force which held out gallantly in Calais towards the end of May, 1940. Above, men of this Territorial regiment are seen on their way to a training camp shortly before the war.

Photo, Courtesy of the London "Evening News"



HERE THERE WAS NO SURRENDER

In the old Citadel at Calais, an entrance to which is seen above, British troops put up a strong resistance in face of a tremendous onslaught. Though outnumbered, they refused to surrender and, as the Nazis acknowledged, 'fought with courage and desperation' until almost all of them were killed or captured. (See also photograph in p. 1566.)

Photo, Associated Press

no arms with me, so I lay down in the sand dunes with a tin of corned beef in each hand.

"In the afternoon the Germans ran up the Nazi flag on the fort. Then British warships steamed in and shelled Calais to a shambles and the flag went down. Now I was hiding underneath the pier. There were fifty others beside me, and we were so close to the Germans that we watched them placing snipers on the forts only eighty yards away.

"There were three officers among us and about eight rifles. We stayed under the pier until 9.30. We were wet and cold and we had had nothing to eat or drink for hours.

"When it was dark we climbed up into the signalling tower on the pier to get a bit of shelter. We were amazed when we got there to find a captain of the Marines. He told us he had been there all day. He had broken down doors and woodwork from the pier and had made some rafts. He said that if we could get nothing else we might push off on these. Others suggested they would swim out to a Belgian boat which was stuck in the harbour. Then, at two in the morning, a yacht came into the harbour looking for survivors. In the darkness it went right past us up to the shore end of the pier, and we did not see it. We caught it just as it was going out to sea again, and signalled to it that we were there. It took us all off and landed us back in England."

In August there became available more details about the struggle for Calais, in a report by Captain A. Williams, Adjutant of the 60th Rifles.

In this narrative the Adjutant explained how the force under Brigadier Nicholson had been handicapped by the loss, right at the start of operations, of some of its



HE VISITED CALAIS BESIEGED

Vice-Admiral J. F. Somerville, above, went himself to Calais in a destroyer when the garrison was holding out and made a personal reconnaissance with a picked party of men.

Photo, Keystone

equipment. The following account is based on one that appeared in the "Daily Telegraph."

The 60th Rifles and the Rifle Brigade, on disembarkation, moved to a position of assembly in the sand dunes on the

Dunkirk side of Calais, where they waited for their vehicles and other equipment. The first vehicle ship carrying the equipment of the 60th Rifles began unloading, but the French stevedores were unwilling to work the crane. There was some shelling by the enemy, and although a strong detachment of Royal Engineers was employed the unloading was not completed until early the next day.

The ship in which was the Rifle Brigade equipment moved to the quay-side and unloading began two hours later, but all work was stopped owing to the departure of the stevedores. Meanwhile, wounded were reaching the quay to board the ship, which eventually returned to England without discharging her cargo.

Capt. Williams stated that it is not known on whose authority the vessel was ordered to return. The consequence was that the Rifle Brigade lost the greater part of its vehicles and equipment, including ammunition.

After the German demand for immediate surrender was refused, on May 26, there followed heavy bombardment, accompanied by almost incessant dive-bombing from the air.

"Our defensive position and the inner town," said Capt. Williams, "were reduced

to a shambles and set in flames. At about 4 p.m. the enemy was in possession of the whole of the docks area and had overpowered the remainder of the Rifle Brigade. The Rifle Brigade Battalion Headquarters and a portion of the Queen Victoria's Rifles, who were reinforcing them, were captured; also the rear Brigade Headquarters.

"The French troops in the Citadel surrendered, and advanced Brigade H.Q. was captured, including the Brigadier. Fort Risban, to the west of the town, had also fallen."

Meanwhile, the 60th Rifles were forced back and eventually surrounded. The battalion split up into small parties at dusk. They attempted to hide in the ruined town and make their way out by night, but the darkness was lit by the flames of the burning ruins and most of them were captured.

Only thirty unwounded men had been evacuated from Calais by the Navy. The remainder were killed or captured. But the heroic resistance had hampered the German advance for another four days—a respite that proved all the more precious because of the disaster that occurred on May 28, when King Leopold of the Belgians ordered his army to lay down its arms. This treacherous capitulation, only eighteen days after the Germans had begun the invasion of Belgium, opened wide the road to Dunkirk and simultaneously uncovered the British left flank.

CAPTURED BUT NOT DISGRACED

Of the three thousand British soldiers who withstood the German attack at Calais, almost all were killed or captured. Below is a column of British prisoners being marched away from the town after their great stand against a force vastly superior in strength.

Photo, Associated Press





IN THE STREETS OF DOOMED DUNKIRK

Here are scenes in the shattered town of Dunkirk during the period of the evacuation. Above, British soldiers marching through a debris-littered street ; left, the statue of Jean Bart in the main square still stands amid the ruins ; below, columns of smoke rising from the burning town.

Photos, Planet News ; Section Cinéma de l'Armée ; Service Cinématographique de la Marine



'A MIRACLE OF DELIVERANCE': EVACUATION OF THE B.E.F. FROM DUNKIRK

Withdrawal Behind the 'Corunna Line'—'A Miracle of Deliverance'—The Navy and the Volunteer Fleet—Wading Out From the Beaches—Pleasure Steamers to the Rescue—Ordeal on Dunkirk Shores—Impotence of the Luftwaffe—A Triumph of Cooperation—Strategic Lessons of the Withdrawal

(Colour maps explaining the retreat and evacuation are printed in pages 1538-9)

THE events which followed on the surrender of the Belgian army are related in Chapter 87. Behind what they themselves described in graphic phrase as the "Corunna Line," held by a gallant rearguard, the bulk of the British Army from Flanders made their way to the beaches of Dunkirk, there to face the most dangerous and trying ordeal known to the soldier. This ordeal of withdrawal in the face of the enemy had seemed indeed so grave to the authorities in London that even a sanguine estimate allowed for the safe evacuation of only about one-tenth of that great number—335,000—actually brought off safely from the Dunkirk beaches.

This evacuation, the greatest feat of its kind in the history of warfare, was carried out under conditions never experienced before, owing to the terrific development of air power and mechanized military force. The flooding of the Yser valley had checked the enemy's mechanized divisions. These were estimated to consist of all that the German Command could spare, besides 40 divisions of other troops amounting to 750,000 men. But even if such a land force could be held off, what of the menace from the air? Bold indeed was it to predict the possibility of so difficult and vast an evacuation close to the bases of the enemy's much vaunted air force.

On May 30, however, it was officially announced that with the help of the Royal Navy the troops not actively engaged in the fighting

Successful had been evacuated—

Evacuation French troops to other French ports farther west, and British troops to England. The R.A.F. had been and still were furiously attacking the enemy's communications, his bases, and his swarming 'planes, establishing a local air superiority everywhere they fought.

So successful did the withdrawal prove that the pace and extent of the evacuation were now increased. Hitherto several flotillas of British destroyers and numerous smaller craft had been co-operating with units of the French fleet; it was necessary now to call upon a great

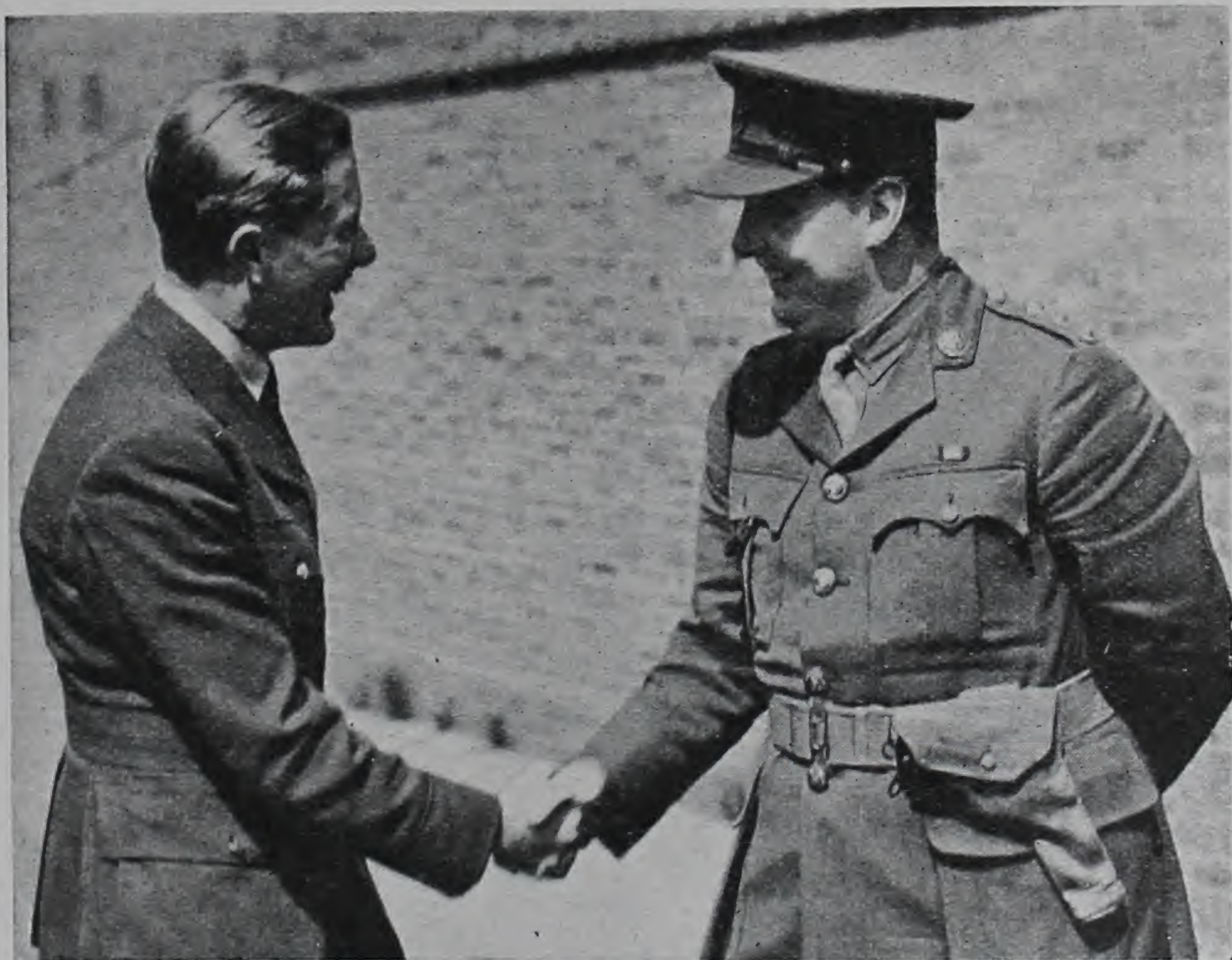
host of willing volunteers, civilian craft and crews, for additional transport.

On June 4 Mr. Winston Churchill addressed the House of Commons. His speech in itself had a tonic effect on the nation, which suddenly realized that it had found its great leader in the time of trial. Eloquent and precise, Mr. Churchill made the world aware of the true meaning of the terse communiqués of the Navy and Air Force. His phrase, "a miracle of deliverance," for the completed evacuation was seen to be justified. No fewer than 335,000 British and French troops had been safely embarked and transported under the guns and bombers of a powerful and triumphant enemy. The total included the whole of the B.E.F. personnel in the Dunkirk area, about a quarter of a million men. The remaining 100,000 of the B.E.F. were now in a

perilous situation in north-west France, and the French northern armies were out of action. In a long series of fierce battles the B.E.F. had lost 30,000 men killed, wounded, and missing. This was much smaller than the loss certainly inflicted on the enemy, "but our losses in material are enormous," Mr. Churchill told the House.

"We have, perhaps, lost one third of the men we lost in the opening days of the battle of March 21, 1918, but we have lost nearly 1,000 guns, and all our transport, and all armoured vehicles that were with the Army in the North. . . . Our thankfulness at the escape of our Army must not blind us to the fact that what has happened in France and Belgium is a colossal military disaster."

Mr. Churchill's warning, spoken before people had an inkling of the imminent collapse of France, could not take away from the splendour of that triumph in



A V.C. HERO OF DUNKIRK

One of the first two Victoria Crosses to be awarded to the Army in the Second Great War was won by Lieut. (later Captain) Harald Marcus Ervine-Andrews of the East Lancashire Regt. He took over about 1,000 yards of defences in front of Dunkirk and held them for over ten hours in face of vastly superior forces, personally accounting for seventeen of the enemy with his rifle and for many more with a Bren gun. He is seen above (right) being congratulated by Flying Officer Peter Dexter, D.F.C.

Photo, Topical

adversity which he had to describe. The Allies had been carrying out the evacuation without pause throughout a week. On Sunday, June 2, when the fighting French rearguards were beginning to retire to the port and beach, Admiral Abrial was reported from Paris as having guaranteed to hold Dunkirk as long as needful, and "with a little assistance indefinitely." The Admiral was one of the last to leave Dunkirk, the defence of which he himself had planned and organized. Finally, everything of military value at the port was destroyed and for months to come Dunkirk would be useless to the enemy.

The losses in ships during this amazing evacuation had been surprisingly small:

Naval	the French lost seven
Losses	destroyers and a supply
	ship, while the British
	lost six destroyers and

24 minor craft. But nearly 1,700 Allied vessels had been engaged in the narrowest part of the Channel, by day and night, carrying out the most difficult of all operations in warfare. The motley armada consisted of 220 light warships and 665 other craft employed by the British, and 300 warships and merchant

vessels with 200 smaller craft used by the French.

The success of the volunteer fleet and the undaunted courage of the troops especially struck the imagination of the British people. Craft of all types dotted the Channel waters from coast to coast, and off the port of Dunkirk and the long pleasure beach of Malo-les-Bains were often clustered in hundreds at a time. Everything had ultimately depended upon their prompt arrival and the eager and untiring service of the personnel. The Admiralty with great foresight had previously obtained full details of all small vessels that might be available for such work, and the order for their assembly met with instantaneous response. Fishermen, yachtsmen, yacht clubs, boat builders, longshore pleasure-craft owners from our seaside resorts far and near, river boatmen and boat-building and hiring firms, even the crews of the London fire floats, manned their craft and rushed them to the assembly point even before they had learnt for what purpose the vessels were needed. And once the truth was out, the press of volunteers was so great that it began



C.-IN-C. AT DUNKIRK

Major-General H. R. L. Alexander, D.S.O., M.C., was the officer placed in command of the B.E.F. in Dunkirk when Lord Gort returned to England. During the war of 1914-18 he was mentioned five times in dispatches. (See also photo in p. 1543.)

Photo, Elliott & Fry

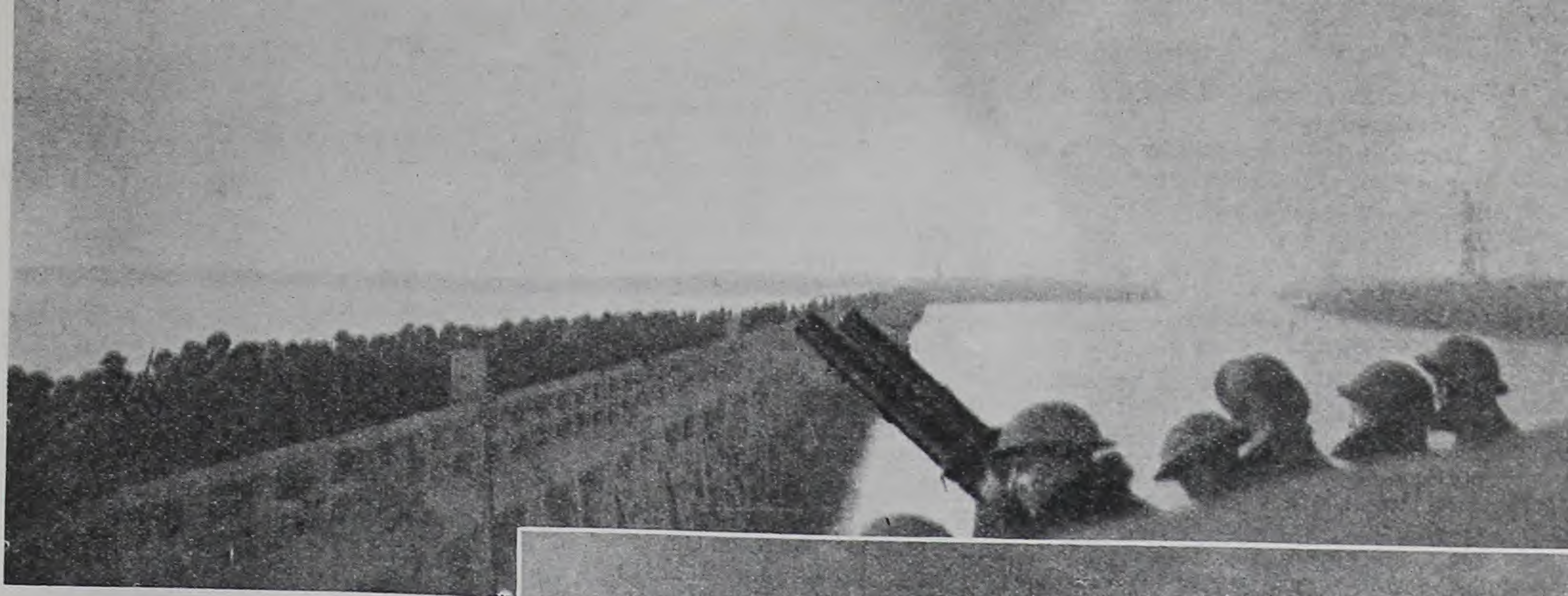
BRITISH POST IN THE BELGIAN SAND DUNES

Two soldiers of the B.E.F. are seen outside a dug-out in the sand dunes at Nieupoort, a Belgian town between Dunkirk and Ostend. Most of the fine old buildings in Nieupoort were destroyed during the 1914-18 war, when there was much fighting around the town.

Photo, Associated Press

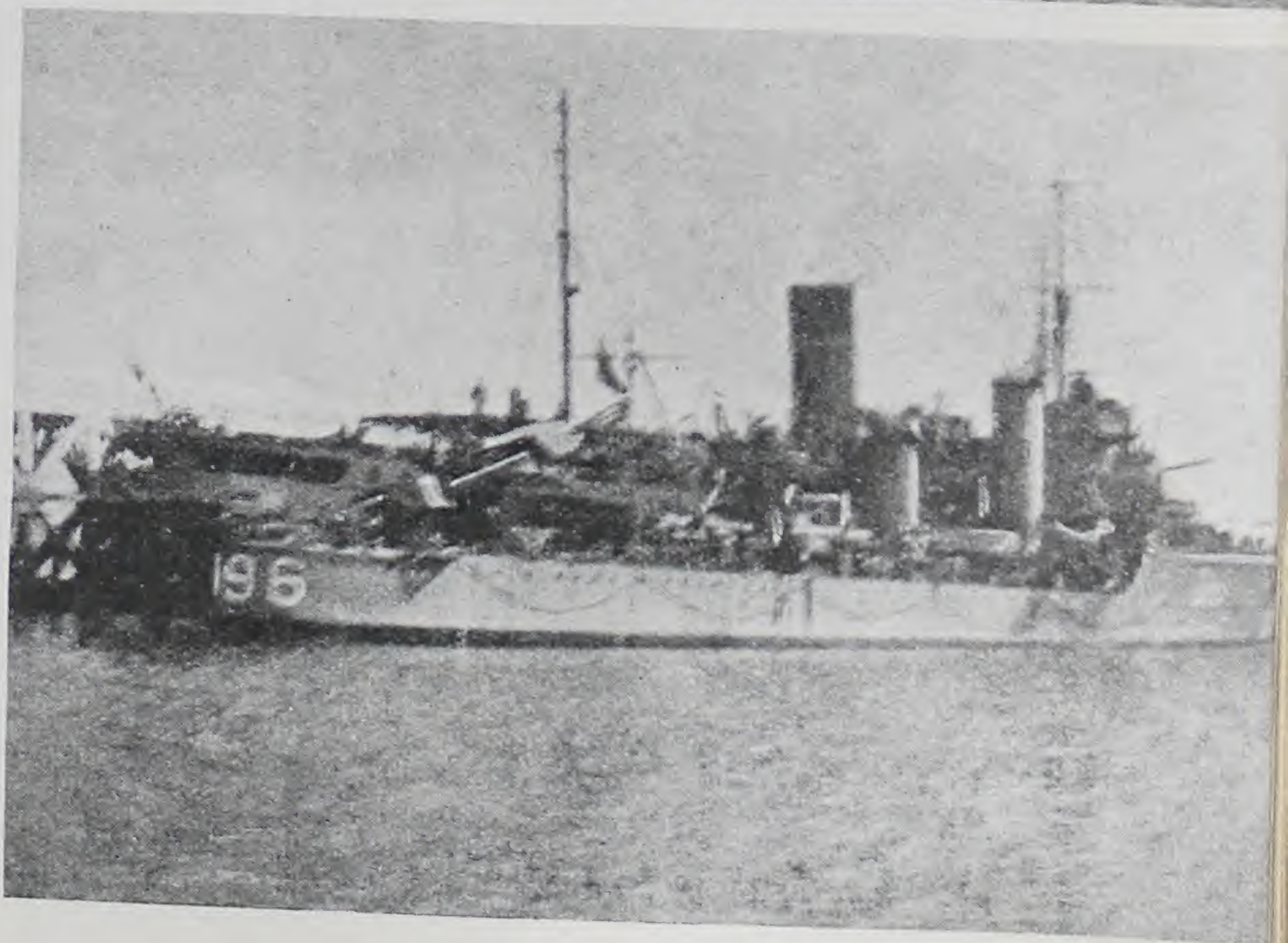
to embarrass the responsible naval officials; men joined in the great adventure by stratagem when they could not go by order. Even women





THIS WAS THE 'MIRACLE'

Above, British troops filing along a jetty at Dunkirk, while machine-guns guard them from low-flying air attack. Right, one of the many auxiliary craft which assisted in the evacuation lying off the blazing town. Below, left, the C.O. with officers and men of the Royal Ulster Rifles waiting on a jetty hurriedly improvised from sunken lorries. Below, right, a British destroyer and another vessel ready to embark men of the B.E.F. from a jetty. Photos, "News Chronicle"; L.N.A.; "The Times"



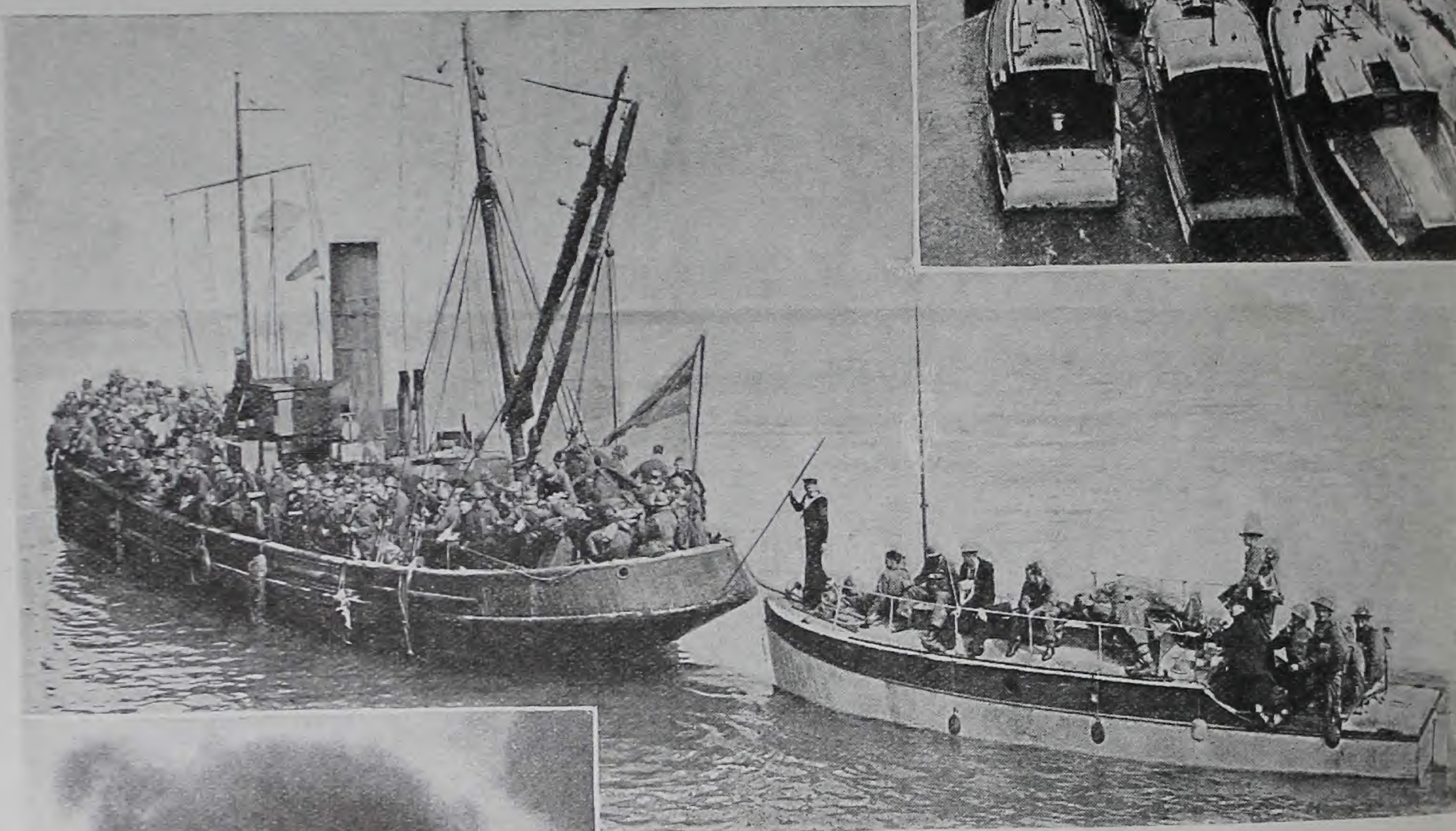
tried to take part with their own yachts or motor-boats.

To and fro, by day and by night, so long as there were men to be transported, these vessels plied the Straits of Dover. Embarking loads of men under artillery

From the Dunkirk Beaches

fire and aerial bombardment, often subjected to machine-gun fire from land and air, they took off soldiers from the crowded beaches, or from ferry craft that came out to meet them. Then they made their passage to ports along the south-east and south coasts of England, enlivened by the cheers and witticisms of the soldiers they had rescued from death or a cruel imprisonment. Thousands of wounded were brought home in those fateful days.

The homely touch of the civilian fleet extended to many of the properly commissioned naval auxiliaries engaged, among which were ships affectionately remembered by holiday makers as pleasure steamers. These seemed to have suffered a big proportion of casualties, and the Admiralty's revised list of losses included four paddle minesweepers: "Brighton Belle" (Lieut. L. K. Perrin, R.N.V.R.); "Gracie Fields" (Lieut. A. C. Weeks, R.N.R.); "Waverley" (Lieut. S. F. Harmer-Elliott, R.N.V.R.); "Brighton Queen" (Lieut. A. Stubbs, R.N.R.). There was also the "Crested



SMALL CRAFT WHICH WORKED WONDERS

Craft of all kinds were pressed into service for the evacuation of the B.E.F. from Northern France. Top right, some of the small river craft returning up the Thames after their unusual journey. Above, small craft laden with French and British troops. Left, an old paddle steamer towing some of the small boats used to carry the men from the beaches to larger vessels.

Photos, G.P.U.; "The Times"

Eagle" (Lieut.-Cmdr. B. R. Booth, R.N.R.), described as "one minesweeper."

Perhaps it was only to be expected that hospital ships transporting wounded would be singled out for special attention from the Nazi bombers, and several minor casualties caused by aerial machine-gun fire included some of the brave women nurses, who had con-

tinued to tend their patients even on the bombarded Dunkirk beaches.

Many stirring incidents of the cross-Channel voyages became known later. Charles Knight, aged 69, had somehow got himself included among the volunteer crew of nine in a motor-boat. Under constant fire the little vessel ferried men from the beach to the transports for three days and nights. Another volunteer was a boy of 15, who took his regular place in his father's



BATTLE OF BRITAIN, 1940, AS ARTISTS SAW IT

Richard Eurich (Admiralty Artist, 1940), painted the striking picture reproduced at top, 'Night Attack Over Southampton Water.' With its spirited handling and bold contrasts it is a fine documentation to those nights of ordeal and victory. Charles Pears has recorded for posterity a daytime battle scene of the period, 'Off Dover, 1940.' The sky criss-crossed with vapour trails left by raiders and defenders, the bursting shells, balloons, falling raiders and pursuing Spitfires—all make up an unforgettable impression. (Official Purchase, 1941.) Exhibited at the National Gallery, London, 1941. Crown Copyright reserved



WITH ALLIED DESTROYERS AND

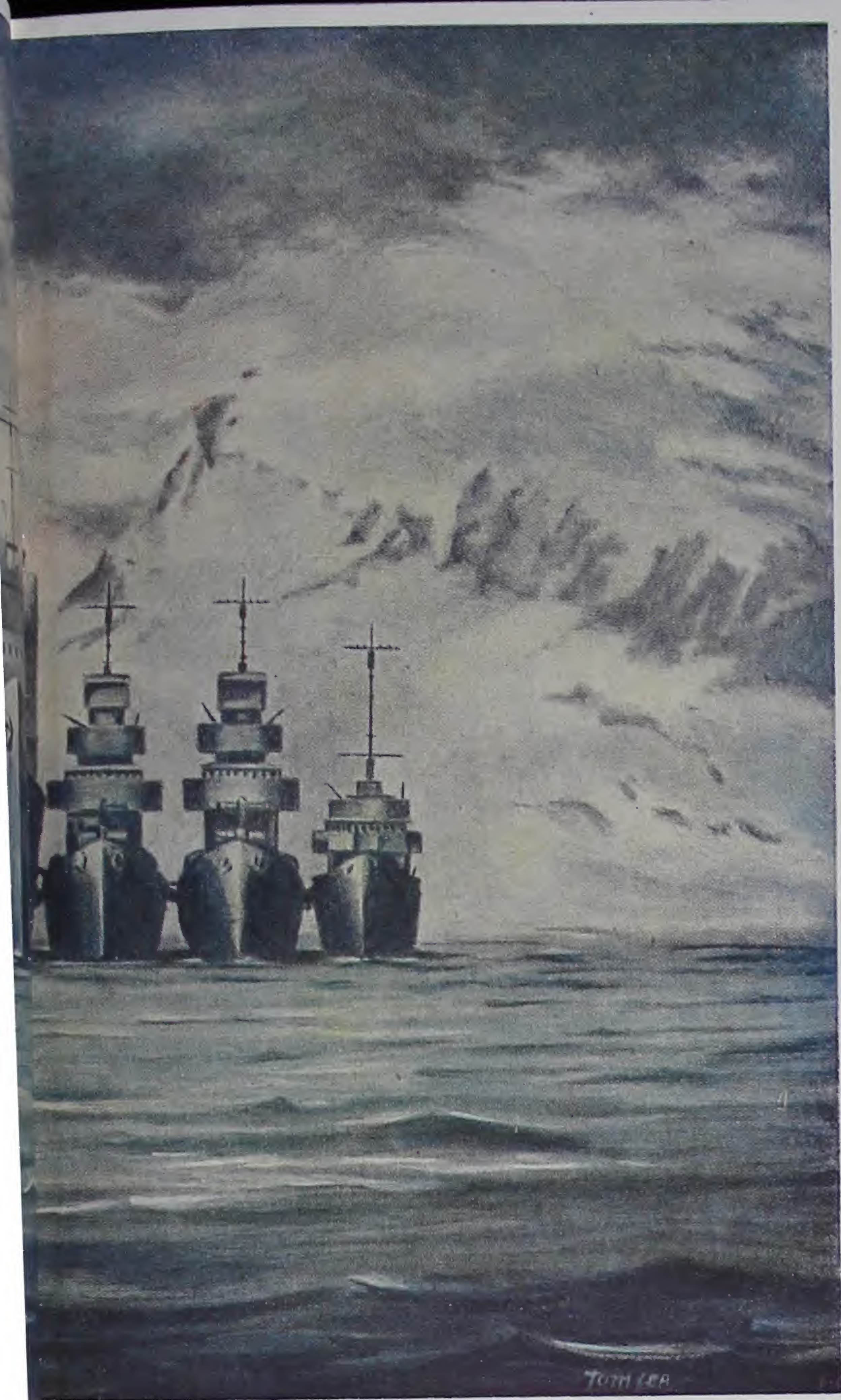
Mr. Tom Lea, who is responsible for the impressive Atlantic base shortly before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. By the time he reached the base the Axis had declared war. The big ship, dwarfed by her bulk, are three American destroyers—moored to the projecting booms on the starboard side of a destroyer which

The three remaining illustrations, from photographs taken during the war, show the class while on patrol and convoy duty in the North Sea. The layer is seen with his heavy machine-gun. The layer is seen with his controls. His sighting eyepiece and frame-sight are a 4-inch A.A. guns of the destroyer and the

Familiarly known as the 'Chicago Piano,' the two-point gun is kept full by the gun crew, in which ammunition is almost spent. It projects shells it projects against a raider spells almost a spell of relaxation but can get to work in an instant. Only aircraft but

At the end of the duty spell of convoy escort or anti-aircraft constant vigilance of service is often brief enough.

Drawing by permission of



SHIPS ON PATROL AND CONVOY IN NORTH SEA AND NORTH ATLANTIC

The water-colour reproduced above, sailed in a United States destroyer to a North Pearl Harbour brought his country into the war as an unqualified belligerent. and war on the U.S. It was an icy grey dawn, with mist and low cloud enshrouding supply ship is signalling with her lamp to a destroyer in the distance. Alongside, —two modern ones and another (farthest to right) dating back to the First Great board side are motor boats, in one of which the artist journeyed to the scene from a halted two miles away on account of storm.

is taken in natural colours, were obtained on British destroyers of the 'Hunt' sea. Left, constant watch for enemy aircraft is kept by the crew of an Oerlikon and on the U-shaped guard into which he rests his shoulder when operating the above. These weapons are used for low-flying aircraft which have eluded the the multiple pom-poms seen in the next photograph, at top, right.

ounder multiple pom-pom is a deadly weapon—quick-firing, fed from shell racks automatically brought to the breeches of the two to six barrels. The pattern of chain destruction within the lethal area. The gunners seen here are enjoying a it on an alert. Like those at the machine-guns described above, they have not enemy motor torpedo-boats to guard against.

submarine patrol comes the welcome break ashore, though this respite from the The bottom right-hand photograph shows the davits being swung out to drop down shore boats.

the artist. Direct colour photographs by Fox Photos





THE WITHDRAWAL FROM DUNKIRK, MAY 26 TO JUNE 2, 1940

The wide, flat sands of the Dunkirk beaches, strewn with troops awaiting embarkation, the calm, shallow seas bringing boats of all kinds to the rescue, are here reflected in the lurid light of the burning town. Through the pall of smoke from oil depots and supply dumps fly Allied and enemy aircraft. Charles Cundall, A.R.A., is one of the eight official artists, appointed by the War Artists' Advisory Committee, who are attached to the Armed Forces. His impression of the scene at Dunkirk may be compared with the photographic illustrations in

pages 912-920 and 925-928.

From the painting by Charles Cundall, A.R.A.; Crown Copyright

motor-boat, while the pair continuously made cross-Channel trips, bringing our men home.

At some places, owing to the shallowness of the water, even wherries were used to get the troops away. Eight soldiers at a time would

Wading Out waded out to the **to Safety** wherries, which then took their loads to waiting motor-boats, in which the men were carried to transports farther out still. Many of the smaller craft were riddled by shrapnel and bullets when they got back at last to England.

Some of the troops landed had been in the thick of the rearguard fighting only a few hours before, while others had patiently waited for 24, 36 or even 48 hours on the perilous beaches, existing on iron rations until their turn came to be taken off. One motor-boat loaded with men stopped in the Channel to pick up two German airmen who had been shot down. Often vessels were chased more than half-way across to England and machine-gunned by enemy 'planes, but the enemy aircraft had a few unpleasant surprises from our troops, who did not neglect to make use of any machine-guns they had been able to fetch away.

Not the least remarkable feature of the evacuation was its orderliness under such trying conditions. The beaches

ZEEBRUGGE BLOCKED ONCE AGAIN

History repeated itself at Zeebrugge when, during the period of the B.E.F. evacuation from the Dunkirk area, the Royal Navy sank concrete-filled block-ships across the lock gates of the canal as shown in the photograph below. Zeebrugge had been successfully blocked by the British Navy in April, 1918.

Photo, Fox



FRENCH NAVAL HERO

In this photograph Vice-Admiral Jean-Marie Abrial, Commander-in-Chief of the French Maritime Forces of the North, is seen in front of Bastion 32, a centre of the Allied resistance at Dunkirk. He was one of the last to leave Dunkirk, which he had held in the face of an overwhelming onslaught by the Germans. On his right is M. Paul Bargeton, French Ambassador in Brussels.

Photo, Service Photographique de la Marine

by Dunkirk were described by one of the returned men as being crowded "like Blackpool on Bank Holiday," but when photographs of the scene were published they showed orderly dispositions of masses of troops who ad-

vanced step by step in column and echelon, spaced out to avoid giving the German dive-bombers too wide a target anywhere. Most of the men still carried their rifles and equipment, and some of them even brought back "souvenirs," ranging from a kitten to a caged canary. Hundreds had had to stand waist high in water for long spells, waiting their turn to wade out to the boats.

It was very fortunate that, on the whole, the weather was good and the





SMILING AFTER THEIR GREAT ORDEAL

Some 335,000 British and French troops were safely embarked and withdrawn from the Dunkirk area. In this photograph a mass of steel-helmeted British soldiers is seen on the quayside of a home port after safe deliverance from the hands of the enemy.

Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright

sea was comparatively calm, or the difficulties of the Navy would have been even greater. The shallow water, narrow channels, and strong tides were serious enough, and in the port itself, while it could still be used, extreme care had to be taken. In the words of an Admiralty communiqué:

"The situation was such that one mistake in the handling of a ship might have blocked a vital channel or that part of the port of Dunkirk which could be used."

On two days a fresh north-westerly wind raised a surf which slowed down the work at the beaches, and only on one forenoon did a ground mist curtail enemy air activity.

"In addition to almost incessant bombing and machine-gun attacks on Dunkirk, the beaches, and the vessels operating off them, the port of Dunkirk and the shipping plying to and fro were under frequent shell fire. This was to some extent checked by bombardment of the enemy artillery positions by our Naval forces. Naval bombardment also protected the flanks of the withdrawal. The enemy was active with submarines and high speed motor torpedo boats. Losses have been inflicted upon both these forces."

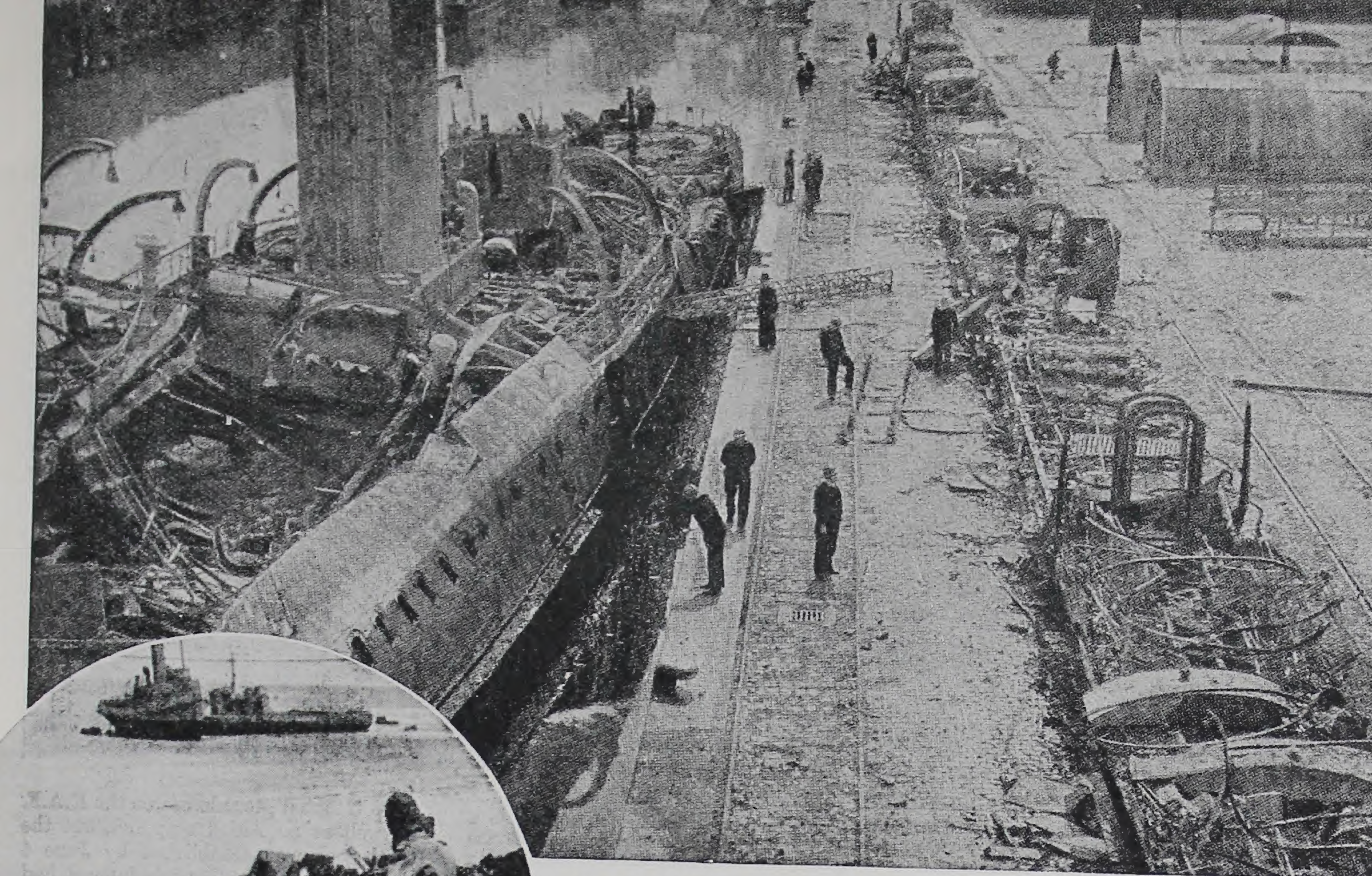
The relative ineffectiveness of the enemy's motor torpedo boats must have been another disappointment for him, as much had been hoped from the use of fast craft of this type, which could strike quickly and escape speedily. And while the battle raged in the Dunkirk area our Navy blocked the Belgian port of Zeebrugge by sinking concrete-filled blockships, and demolished the sea-gates of the canal. Nor did the Marines forget to destroy the fuel stocks.

Blocking of Zeebrugge

Though not always in view of the men on the beaches or those fighting their way to Dunkirk, the fighters and bombers of the R.A.F. were guarding the B.E.F. all the while. The enemy's failure to prevent the evacuation was the best proof that the R.A.F. had been harassing him all the time, even when British machines were neither heard nor seen by the B.E.F. It was to answer a natural but mistaken feeling of grievance that the Prime Minister in his speech in the House of Commons on June 4 paid a special tribute to our airmen, which was reinforced by that of the War Office communiqué.

There were some dog-fights between British and German machines above the actual scene of the evacuation, and Mr. Churchill referred to one such incident when a German bomber was driven into the water after casting away all its bombs; it had been forced down by the ruse of an R.A.F. pilot, who, in fact, had used up all his ammunition.

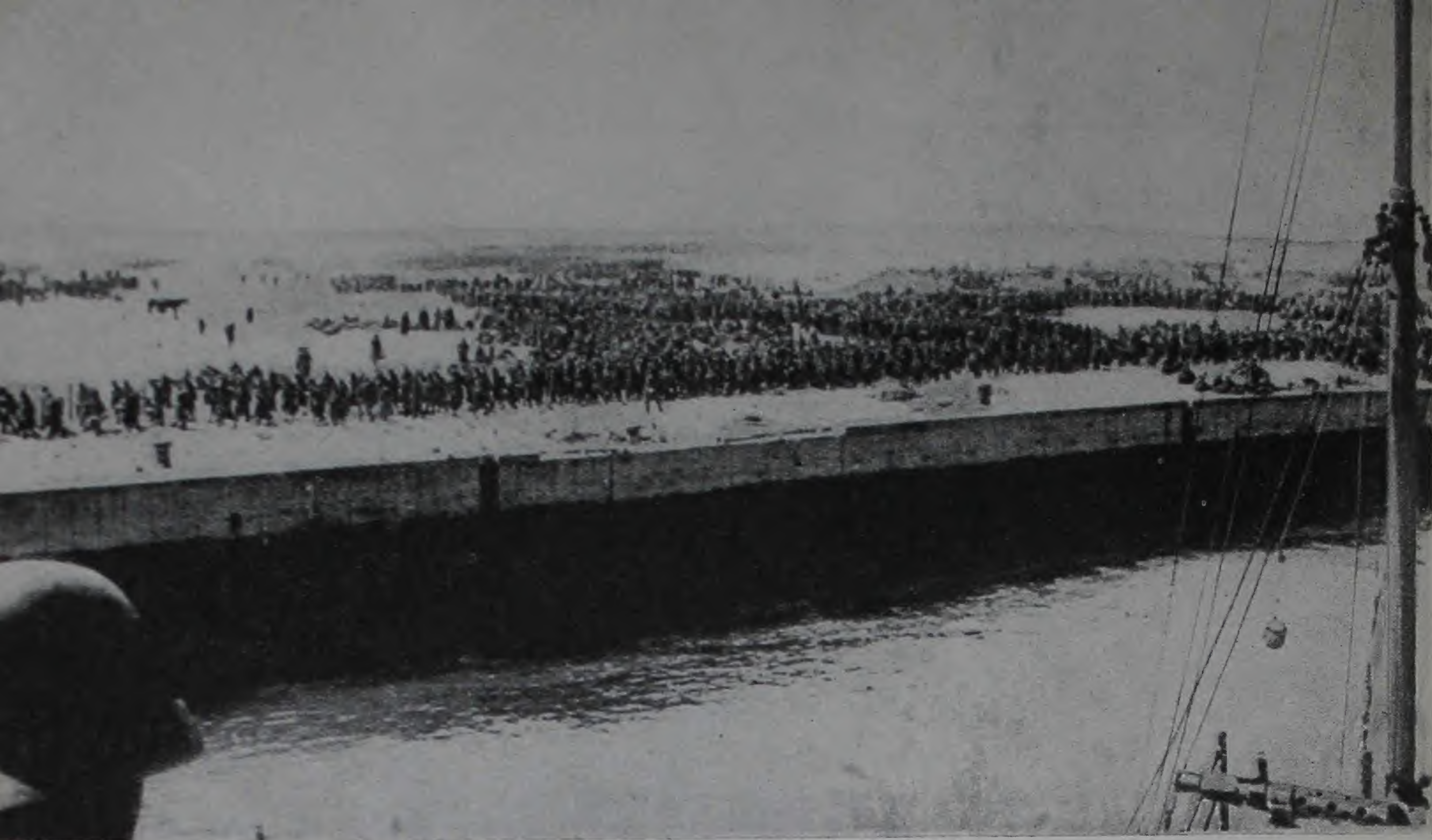
Indeed, alongside the demonstration of Britain's command of the seas, the



AFTERMATH OF DUNKIRK

In the photograph above is seen all that remained of a hospital train after German bombers had attacked it in Dunkirk harbour. The burned-out hulk of the hospital ship to which the wounded were to have been transferred lies alongside the quay. Left, Count Ciano, Italian Foreign Minister (standing in car), surveys the beaches near Dunkirk after the evacuation of the B.E.F. Below, the outskirts of Dunkirk when the Germans entered. Abandoned equipment litters the ground.





HEROIC REARGUARD MADE PRISONERS

Above, French prisoners of war are being marched away from the beaches of Dunkirk to a German internment camp. They formed part of the heroic rearguard which covered the evacuation of the Allies. Their heroism led to capture, but fortunately many of them, as can be seen, did not lose their lives.

Photo, Associated Press

superior quality of British airmen and their machines was one of the most heartening of the lessons taught by the Dunkirk evacuation. No trick of German propaganda could conceal the significance of the victory that arose phoenix-like from the ashes of disaster. (The story of this aspect of the operations is told in a later chapter devoted to the Air War.) As early as June 1 the "New York Herald-Tribune" published a summary of our "case" far more cogent and concise than the British Ministry of Information had ever shown itself capable of. The message was from the journal's military correspondent, and said:

"It has been three days since the Germans proclaimed the destruction of the Allied armies to be a matter of a few hours; it has been a week since the German official communiqué was brushing aside evacuation by sea with the confident remark, 'Our dive-bombers will take care of that.'

"But the evacuation proceeds and the dive-bombers are not taking care of it, though they are trying very hard. The German Air Force has not been able to stop the withdrawal, because it is being adequately opposed. In Norway, as in Poland, the German Air Force accomplished wonders because it had no opposition worthy of the name."

And, dealing with the deeper moral of the situation, a leading article on the

same day in the "New York Times" stated:

"So long as the English tongue survives, the word Dunkirk will be spoken with reverence. In that harbour—such a hell as never blazed on earth before—at the end of a lost battle the rags and blemishes that had hidden the soul of democracy fell away. There, beaten but unconquered, in shining splendour, she faced the enemy, this shining thing in the souls of free men which Hitler cannot command. It is the great tradition of democracy. It is the future. It is victory."

Certainly the ultimate goal of the blitzkrieg, the subjugation of Britain, had failed for the time being at least. Time was still on the side of the British Empire, and was still the remorseless enemy of Hitler's land-locked machinery of destruction.

The success of the evacuation and much of its strategic promise for the future depended on the Royal Air Force. The operation as a whole had been a magnificent example of co-operation between naval, air and land forces, sustained with skill and courage; nevertheless, the destruction of the enemy's hopes was due to the fact that the R.A.F. proved itself everywhere superior to the German Air Force, and this in spite of the numerical preponderance of the Nazis.

The German communiqués made their usual fantastic statements, claiming to

have inflicted great losses on the R.A.F. as well as on Allied shipping, but the truth was well established by June 4 that at least four German 'planes had been shot down for every British one lost. On some days the enemy losses were far heavier than they could afford, and explained the Luftwaffe's utter failure to fulfil the task allotted to it.

During Saturday, June 1, for example, R.A.F. fighters destroyed or severely damaged 78 German bombers and fighters over the Dunkirk area. The German losses during a week averaged more than 50 'planes a day. A squadron of the new Defiant fighter 'planes shot down 37 enemy machines in one day, without loss.

The official figure for British air losses from May 10 to June 1 was announced as 302 'planes. It was also estimated that the Heavy Nazi Germans had certainly **Air Losses** lost about 3,000 'planes since the previous September, and probably more. While the enemy's numerical preponderance was being worn down the R.A.F.'s superior quality (so convincingly demonstrated at Dunkirk) was the means of inflicting far heavier damage by bombing stores, aerodromes, communications, and factories than anything the German Air Force had achieved against real opposition. Though the loss of the Channel ports was a natural cause of anxiety in Britain, the strategic lessons of the successful evacuation gave equally strong reasons for disquiet in Germany.

Diary of the War

MAY, 1940

May 1, 1940. War Office states that at Narvik areas occupied by Allied forces have been extended. British troops near Dombaas have withdrawn. Norwegians claim to have recaptured Roeros and Toenset. R.A.F. attack aerodromes at Stavanger, Fornebu and Aalborg. Minesweeper "Dunoon" reported sunk by mine.

May 2. Announced that Allied troops south of Trondheim have been embarked at Aandalsnes. Submarines "Tarpon" and "Sterlet" overdue and presumed lost. Sloop "Bittern" reported lost. R.A.F. again bomb Stavanger and other aerodromes.

May 3. Announced that Allied forces have been evacuated from Namsos without loss. R.A.F. bomb Stavanger, Fornebu and Danish airfield at Ry, North Jutland.

May 4. Allied guns shelling Narvik from land and sea. Two attacks by Nazi raiders on S.E. coast of England beaten off by R.A.F. and shore defences.

May 5. Operations continue at Narvik. Fortress of Hegra reported to have surrendered. Norwegian Foreign Minister and Minister of Defence arrive in London to confer with Government.

May 6. Desperate resistance of Norwegian troops north of Roeros against Germans advancing from Stoeren. Three Allied destroyers, H.M.S. "Afridi," French "Bison," and Polish "Grom," reported sunk by enemy aircraft off Norway. Three British trawlers, "Penn," "Hercules" and "Leonora," overdue and presumed lost.

May 7. Germans admit that Allied pressure on Narvik has increased. All leave stopped in Holland and coastal defences strengthened. British collier "Brighton" sunk off Dunkirk.

May 8. Government criticized in both Houses of Parliament on conduct of Norwegian campaign. As result of a division Government has majority of 81. Six naval trawlers reported lost off Norway.

May 9. Germans retreating north and north-east of Narvik before Allied and Norwegian pressure. R.A.F. shoot down two Nazi planes off N.E. Scotland. Dutch Government orders closing of all canal locks in Amsterdam area.

May 10. Germany invades Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg at dawn. Parachute troops land, especially around Rotterdam. Dutch forces hold enemy at Delfzyl in north, and along Yssel and Maas defence lines, where they blow up bridges. Enemy cross Belgian frontier at four points. Bombing raids on many towns, including Brussels and Antwerp. Sharp fighting in Luxemburg. Allied troops cross into Belgium along front from North Sea to Moselle. R.A.F. very active against enemy aircraft, aerodromes and communications. Mr. Chamberlain resigns and Mr. Churchill succeeds him as Premier. Enemy raiders drop bombs in Kent. British troops land in Iceland. German troopship mined in the Sound.

May 11. Germans stated to have crossed Yssel near Arnheim. Big battle in progress at Rotterdam. French troops in contact with enemy west of Moselle. Heavy Nazi attack in Maastricht district. Enemy cross Albert Canal, advance to outskirts of Tongres and reach Waremmé. R.A.F. deliver series of attacks on German troops in Belgium, and Rhineland aerodromes and railway junctions. Mr. Churchill sets up War Cabinet of five members.

May 12. Germans stated to have crossed Meuse in Dutch province of Limburg and penetrated into Belgium, but to have been repulsed at Hasselt. Pressure continues west of Maastricht and in the region of Tongres. Enemy attacks French positions near Forbach. H.M. submarine "Seal" overdue and considered lost.

May 13. Dutch forces, after delaying Germans at Yssel River for 48 hours, withdraw to flooded zone. Germans cross Groningen and Friesland. In south enemy reaches Langstraat and then Moerdijk Bridge. Belgian armies on Meuse and Albert Canal fall back on second line of defence. Great mechanized battle taking place near St. Trond. Dutch Royal Family arrive in London.

May 14. Enemy having recaptured Rotterdam, Dutch High Command orders fighting to cease, except in Zeeland. Battle of Meuse continues along 120-mile front. Enemy spread fanwise through broken defences at Maastricht. Heavy attacks between Namur and Givet, in Sedan sector and between Longwy and Montmédy. Dutch Government remove to London. L.D.V. force initiated.

May 15. Enemy cross Meuse between Mézières and Namur. Salient driven into French lines near Sedan. Germans occupy The Hague, Amsterdam and other Dutch cities. H.M. destroyer "Valentine" reported beached off Dutch coast.

May 16. R.A.F. make heavy night attack on communications east of Rhine. Heavy fighting between Gembloux and Namur. Allied forces converging on Narvik occupy two villages north of fjord.

May 17. B.E.F. reported to have withdrawn to positions west of Brussels. Germans enter Brussels after capturing Louvain and Malines. Massive attack develops between Sambre and Meuse. Heavy fighting on front from Sedan to Rethel. R.A.F. again raid Western Germany. Dutch islands of Walcheren and Beveland in Zeeland evacuated. Belgian liner "Ville de Bruges" sunk by bombing.

May 18. Fighting continues in regions of Avesnes and Vervins, chiefly round Guise and Landrecies. R.A.F. continue operations in Belgium, France and Western Germany.

May 19. Main fighting north of St. Quentin and in region of Montmédy. Weygand succeeds Gamelin as C.-in-C. R.A.F. continue attacks on enemy communications in France and Belgium, and oil depots in N.W. Germany.

May 20. German pressure continues from St. Quentin towards Channel ports. Heavy fighting east of Cambrai. Germans capture Laon. Enemy repulsed near Rethel and south of River Scarpe. R.A.F. fire oil tanks at Rotterdam. H.M. destroyer "Whitley" reported damaged by bombs and beached.

May 21. Enemy forces reach Amiens and Arras. Germans also claim to be in Abbeville and to have defeated French Ninth Army. H.M. cruiser "Effingham" reported lost and minelayer "Princess Victoria" mined.

May 22. British forces counter-attack between Arras and Douai. Heavy fighting in progress between Valenciennes and Cambrai. H.M. trawler "Rifsnes" reported sunk by bombs.

May 23. Abbeville in enemy hands and heavy fighting around and in Boulogne. Fierce fighting in Arras sector. Germans cross Scheldt at Oudenarde; Allied forces withdraw behind River Lys. R.A.F. bombers attack objectives in Meuse sector, at Namur and north of Aisne. Power station near Leipzig bombed. Sir Oswald Mosley and other Fascists arrested.

May 24. Violent fighting continues between Valenciennes, Cambrai and Arras. British troops withdraw from Boulogne. Germans claim capture of Tournai and Ghent. R.A.F. bomb communications in Rhineland.

May 25. Hard fighting continues in Boulogne. Coastal Command aircraft bomb oil tanks at Rotterdam. Enemy aircraft drop bombs during night in North Riding and East Anglia.

May 26. Enemy launch strong offensive against Belgian forces on left flank of Allies. Germans occupy Boulogne, French still holding citadel. H.M. destroyer "Wessex" and trawler "Charles Boyes" reported sunk.

May 27. Violent fighting continues near Courtrai. French forces retire from Valenciennes. Belgians at Courtrai give ground towards Menin. British troops at Aire attack flank of enemy making for Calais. East of Aisne Germans attack persistently.

May 28. Belgian Army surrenders by order of King Leopold. Belgian Government repudiate his decision. Narvik captured by Allied forces. H.M. trawlers "Melbourne" and "Cape Passaro" sunk.

May 29. Allied armies fighting desperate rearguard action towards coast. Strong naval and air forces defending port of Dunkirk. Germans claim capture of Ostend, Lille, and Ypres.

May 30. Fighting retreat of B.E.F. and French forces continues. Evacuation from Dunkirk begins. War Office announces that heroic stand of British garrison at Calais has been invaluable. Destroyers "Grafton," "Grenade" and "Wakeful" reported sunk off France, as well as transport "Abukir."

May 31. Evacuation proceeding. French recapture part of Abbeville. British warship "Curlew" reported sunk.

TRUMPET CALLS AS THE BATTLE OF FRANCE BEGAN

Less than twenty-four hours after the Dunkirk evacuation was completed Germany launched a new offensive along the Somme and Aisne. Below we give two of General Weygand's Orders of the Day to his Army, Hitler's addresses to his soldiers and to the German people, and a notable broadcast by M. Reynaud to the French nation at the beginning of the greatest battle in history.

GEN. WEYGAND, IN AN ORDER OF THE DAY, JUNE 5, 1940:

THE battle of France has started. The order is to defend our positions without thought of withdrawal. Officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the French Army, let the thought of our Fatherland, wounded by the invaders, inspire you with unshakable resolution to hold on where you are. The examples of our glorious past show that courage and determination always gain the day.

Hold on to the soil of France. Look only forward. The High Command has made its preparations in order to support you from the rear. The fate of our Fatherland, the maintenance of our liberty, and the future of our sons depend on your steadfastness.

HITLER, IN AN ORDER OF THE DAY TO THE GERMAN ARMY, JUNE 5, 1940:

TODAY another great battle begins on the Western Front. You will be joined by countless new German divisions who will meet the enemy for the first time and will defeat them. This fight for the freedom and existence of our people now and in the future will be continued until the enemy rulers in London and Paris, who still believe in carrying on the war as the best means of realizing their destructive plans, are annihilated. Our victory will teach them a lesson which will go down in history. The thoughts of the whole of Germany are with you.

HITLER, IN A PROCLAMATION TO THE GERMAN PEOPLE, JUNE 5, 1940:

PEOPLE of Germany! The greatest battle of all time has been brought to a victorious conclusion by our soldiers. In a few weeks we have taken more than 1,200,000 prisoners. Holland and Belgium have surrendered. The greater part of the British Expeditionary Force has been annihilated, taken prisoner, or forced to flee from the Continent. Three French armies have ceased to exist. Thus the danger of an invasion of the Ruhr territory has been definitely averted.

People of Germany! It is your soldiers who have accomplished this glorious task. I therefore order that flags be flown for eight days from today onwards in honour of our soldiers. I further order the ringing of bells for three days. May their ringing accompany the prayers which the German people will continue to offer for their sons because this morning the German divisions and air units have been assigned new tasks in the fight for the freedom and future of our people.

Greater Germany dominates the air, sea, and coasts of the North Sea and Channel. As our enemies still reject peace, they shall have war of total annihilation.

M. PAUL REYNAUD, PRIME MINISTER OF FRANCE, IN A BROADCAST TO THE FRENCH NATION, JUNE 6, 1940:

GERMANY has launched herself against us with her usual brutality by three separate thrusts. The first was when German propaganda announced that the Allied Armies which had gone to fight in Belgium had been encircled and would be annihilated. They were to be cut off from the sea, deprived of munitions and of provisions, and the world would witness a capitulation without precedent in history. In face of the impossibility of repairing this vast loss of fighters the morale of the Allies would be crushed.

The ring of steel was, however, never closed, and 333,000 Allied soldiers were embarked at Dunkirk, teaching Germany the significance of mastery over the seas. Far from breaking up, the morale of our troops and of our country revealed itself equal to the strain and worthy of our ancestors. The heroism of the battle of Flanders and of the rearguard fight before Dunkirk has already gone down in history. . . .

The second German enterprise was aimed at breaking the morale of Paris. Last Monday Hitler organized a spectacular raid on the capital. He employed hundreds of bombers and fighters. What were the objectives? That is of little importance because everybody knows, and he knows, that, with the inaccurate bombing, women, children and old people were hit. Did all this disturb Paris? Not for a second. Some minutes after the bombardment I saw on the spot the proud faces of our working men and women, of the people of Paris who do not know how to tremble. We know now that what appeared to be a colossal raid was nothing to the soul of Paris. . . .

The third German enterprise, and the most decisive one, is the one we witness today. It is the battle for France. It is an attack in grand style preceded by a proclamation by Hitler to his troops. All the means which we know have been put into operation. Aircraft and armoured divisions are once more attempting an infiltration and a break-through of our front. The battle has hardly commenced and I shall tell you nothing but what General Weygand has told me.

"I am satisfied," he said, "with the manner in which the battle has begun and the manner in which my orders for resistance at any price are being executed. . . ."

Since the beginning of the battle hundreds of enemy tanks have been destroyed and Allied aviation is supporting the action of our troops. All the world watches breathlessly the development of this battle, because the battle of June, 1940, will decide its fate, as Hitler has said, perhaps for centuries.

What is the risk which must be realized in Europe and outside Europe? Today all the world knows: it is a regime of oppression, where men who are not Germans play but the role of slaves. The new world announced by Hitler in his proclamation may begin perhaps by trickery; but soon enough will follow orders, bullying, smacks in the faces of the workers, the moral and physical destruction of the élite. It would be the Middle Ages again, which would not be illuminated by the mercy of Christ.

This dream of German hegemony will be smashed against the French resistance, because the France which is standing up today against Hitler is not the France of the period between the two wars. It is another France, just as the Britain which is fighting Hitler is not the Britain of the last twenty years. We, the French of June, 1940, have but one thought—to save France. All the members of the Government are animated by a common will—to conquer. We will not lose our time when the country is in danger on debates on responsibility. We will not weaken France by dividing her. . . .

Let the spectators of the drama of the battle of France understand, and understand quickly, that the stake is immense and time is measured. As for us, more than ever we have confidence in our arms.

GENERAL WEYGAND, IN AN ORDER OF THE DAY, JUNE 9:

THE German offensive has now been unleashed on the whole front, from the sea to Montmédy. Tomorrow it will stretch as far as Switzerland. The order still is for each man to fight without thought of retreat, looking straight ahead of him where the command has placed him. The Commander-in-Chief is not unaware of the valiant efforts of which the armies engaged and the Air Force are giving a magnificent example. He thanks them for their efforts. France demands still more.

Officers, non-commissioned officers, and men, the safety of our country requires of you not only your courage but all the resolution, initiative and fighting spirit of which you are capable. The enemy has suffered considerable losses. He will soon reach the end of his effort. We have now reached the last quarter of the hour. Hold fast.

THE BATTLE OF FRANCE OPENS: SIX FATEFUL DAYS

Weygand's Line—Anti-Tank Defence in Depth—Battle of the Somme Begins—Onslaught by German Armoured Divisions—Highlanders on the Allied Left Flank—Germans Reach the Aisne—Mass Attack Between Aumale and Noyon—French Abandon the Line of the Somme—Enemy Columns on the Outskirts of Rouen—With the British on the Left of the Line—Bombing of Paris

WHILE the great retreat to Dunkirk continued (see Chap. 90), while hundreds of thousands of men were successfully evacuated from those beaches which, so the Nazis had hoped and boasted and so their enemies had feared, would be the scene of a surrender unparalleled in military history, the main French armies, under General Weygand, were doing their best to establish themselves on a line which traversed northern France from the estuary of the Somme to the first forts of the Maginot Line proper near Montmédy.

This line presented an almost continuous series of water obstacles, but was without other permanent defences, and time

The Weygand Line was lacking to construct elaborate works. Moreover, the troops available to hold it were not only numerically insufficient but not always of the best quality, for there were many poorly trained reservists. A great part of the French army had been already lost in the Flanders disaster; another large section was facing Italy, and yet another pinned to the rigid Maginot Line.

By June 2 Weygand had completed his dispositions in contact with the advanced elements of the German Army, whose main forces were rushing

south intent on leaving no breathing space for French recovery. From the Channel coast the zone of contact followed the Somme from its estuary near Abbeville to Amiens. Along its lower reaches the French continued to hold certain bridgeheads on the northern bank of the river, but at Amiens the position was reversed, for the Germans had consolidated their hold on a little pocket of territory south of the river. From Amiens the French positions followed the left bank of the Upper Somme to Péronne and Ham; thence the zone followed the Crozat Canal to the Upper Oise, near La Fère. Again a few miles, and it ran along the southern bank of the Ailette Canal connecting the Oise and the Aisne, and thence along the south bank of the Aisne past the Chemin des Dames to Neufchâtel and Rethel to Attigny. Here it left the river and swept across country beyond the Meuse to Montmédy, where it made contact with the Maginot Line, still intact to the Swiss frontier.

Along this line the French had the

following forces: between the coast and Montmédy, 43 infantry divisions (many of them weak), 3 armoured divisions of which two were deficient in tanks, and 3 poorly armed cavalry divisions. Between Montmédy and the Swiss frontier were 17 fortress divisions.

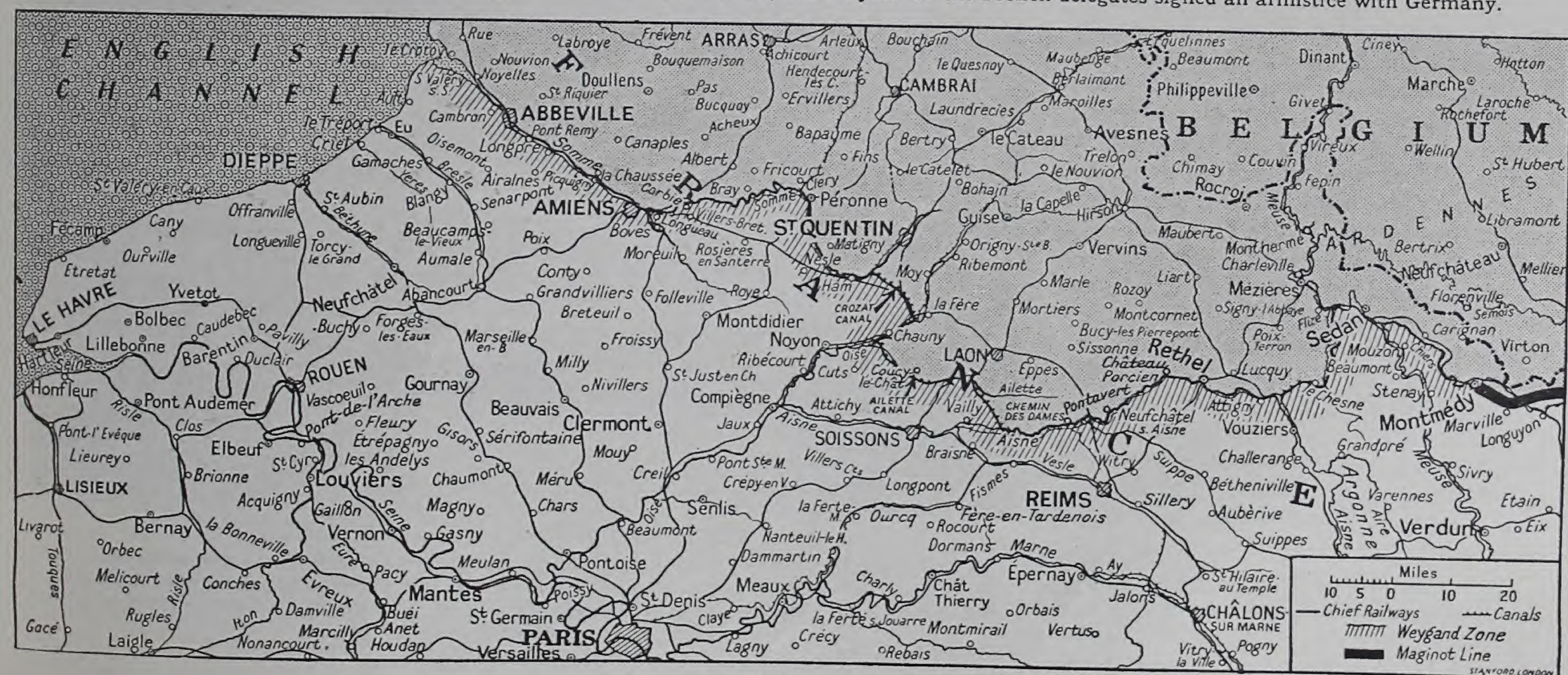
In the early hours of June 5 the Battle of the Somme

opened with a tremendous German onslaught at various points on the 120-mile front between the Channel and the Laon-Soissons road, seeking or attempting to form points of weakness in the French positions. The French defences were blasted by hurricane artillery bombardment, followed by concentrated attacks of dive-bombers, before the masses of German infantry went over the top. Late in the afternoon a number of tanks were thrown into the battle. The communiqué issued in Paris that night reported that: "The battle which began this morning has become more intense in the region of Amiens, Péronne (at both of which the

Battle of the Somme

THE WEYGAND DEFENCE LINE

The map below shows the Weygand Defence Line at the beginning of the Battle of France on June 5, 1940. The tinted portion denotes territory conquered by the Nazis up to that date. The extent of their advance by June 10 is shown in the map in page 933. By June 14 the Germans had entered Paris, and on June 22 the French delegates signed an armistice with Germany.





MISFORTUNE PURSUES PÉRONNE

By June 5, 1940, the Germans had managed to secure bridgeheads on the Somme in the region of Amiens and Péronne. Péronne, the Grand' Place of which is seen above, looking west, was held by the Germans in the previous war until March 18, 1917, and again from March 24 to September 1, 1918. It was largely rebuilt, but was again damaged in 1940.

Photo, A. J. Insall

Germans had already secured bridgeheads), and the Ailette Canal. The enemy has brought into action important forces, particularly tanks and aircraft. On the whole these attacks have been held. Our troops even when passed by the tanks resist energetically at the points of support occupied by them and maintain their positions." The main attack had been delivered from the Somme bridgehead south of Péronne, which the Germans had captured on May 18.

The points of support (points d'appui) mentioned in the communiqué referred to the new anti-tank defence for which General Weygand was given the credit. Instead of

Defence the lines of trenches,
in buttressed here and
Depth there by concrete strong-
points, that were nor-

mal in the battles of the Somme of 1916 and 1918, in this new battle French defences consisted of hastily fortified points of support, generally villages, solidly held and spaced in depth. It was realized, indeed expected, that some at least of the attackers' tanks would penetrate between the points, but it was held that such infiltration would be to little purpose, for the German infantry and the supply columns bringing petrol and ammunition would be unable to follow in view of the fierce fire which would be brought to bear against them from either flank. To complete the defence system, however, mobile reserves to finish off the infiltrating hordes were required, and these were lacking.

Owing to difficulty in getting munitions and food to the points of support they were in most cases quickly overrun, while the French reserves were

insufficient to allow vigorous counter-attacks on enemy tanks that had penetrated between the strong-points. Thus the defence broke down mainly because of French inferiority in men and armament in the threatened sectors. By night the Somme had been abandoned from Amiens to the coast; panzer columns had reached Roye and Moreuil.

On the next day, June 6, the onslaught on the front from Abbeville to the Aisne was renewed with furious intensity. As on the first day, the artillery fire and the air bombardment were terrific, but the Germans threw into the battle a very much larger number of tanks; more than 2,000 were estimated

to have been engaged in groups of 200 to 300 at a time, and although the leaders were exposed to the intense fire put up by the French guns and cannon-firing planes, so that several hundreds were destroyed, hundreds more lumbered up to take their places in the battle.

The speed with which the Germans organized these attacks was amazing, and testified to the efficiency of their Staff and administration service. On the other side that night's French communiqué ran, "Our divisions have fought magnificently, clinging to the strong-points; battalions, companies, platoons and batteries faced up to the onslaught of the French tanks, smothering them Fight with their fire. Our Magnificently aviation worked for all

it was worth, and, attacking the armoured vehicles with bombs and guns, supported without respite our infantry and artillery." Yet it was admitted that in the course of this unprecedented onslaught by the armoured masses of the enemy certain of the French units had been submerged and outflanked, particularly in the region of the Ailette, where enemy detachments pushed forward until they reached the heights bordering the right bank of the Aisne.

The French 2nd Army had to re-form on the left bank of the Aisne. From Amiens to the sea the defence line gave way. In the region of the Lower Somme enemy elements succeeded in penetrating and infiltrating as far as the little river Bresle.

It was here on the extreme left flank of the Allied line that British troops,



HISTORIC TOWN OF ABBEVILLE

Abbeville was the scene of fierce fighting during the early days of June, 1940, and was severely damaged by air bombardment. This historic town was a British base during the war of 1914-18, but suffered little damage, though occasionally bombed. Here is the Place Courbet and the 15th-century Cathedral of S. Vulfran.

Photo, G. MacCormack



THEY WERE UP TO THEIR NECKS AT DUNKIRK

Luckily the sea was calm on the whole during the evacuation of the B.E.F. from Dunkirk, and, as this photograph shows, many of the men were able to wade out from the shore to the vessels waiting for them, forming a human chain from the sandy beach to the ship's side

Photo, G.P.U.





SCENES FROM THE MIRACULOUS EVACUATION

The remarkable photograph above shows Dunkirk in flames after incessant German shelling and air bombardment during the withdrawal of the B.E.F. A rescue ship which has been hit is seen on the left. Below left, British soldiers on the Dunkirk beaches shooting at Nazi aircraft while bombs burst around them. Below, British and French troops waiting on the beaches to be taken aboard the rescue ships.

Photos, "News Chronicle"; Fox; Sport & General

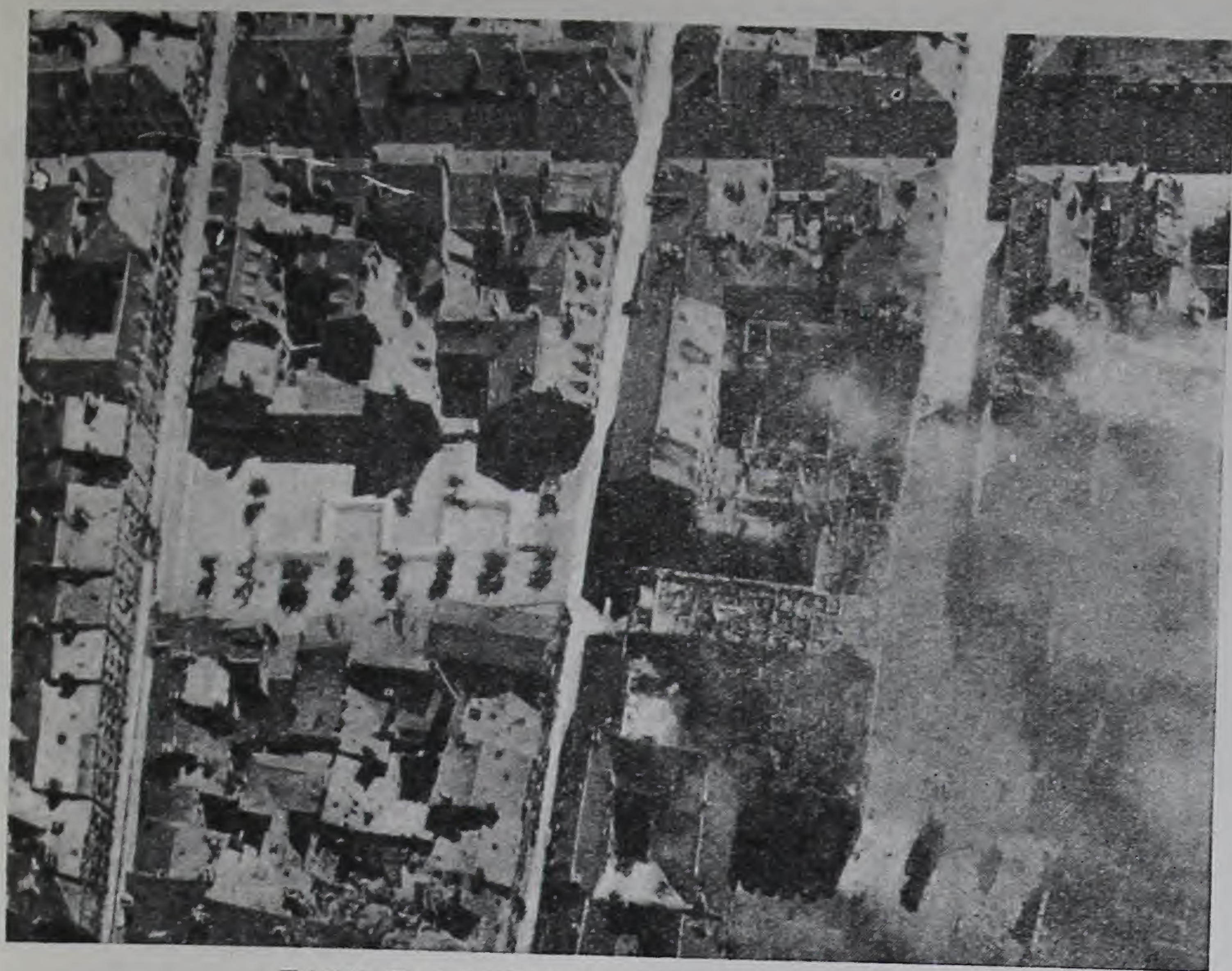




SAFELY BACK IN A BRITISH PORT

After eventful days these men of the B.E.F. have arrived home from Dunkirk, safely escorted by units of the Royal Navy. Despite the fact that nearly 1,700 Allied vessels took part in the evacuation, in the narrowest part of the Channel, by day and night, the losses in ships were remarkably small

Photo. British Official : Crown Copyright



EASY TARGET FOR THE LUFTWAFFE

The German air force was able to make good use of its immense numerical superiority in the early days of the blitzkrieg. The German aerial photograph above shows a French town being bombed by Nazi aircraft.

Photo, "Die Wehrmacht," Berlin

been put into operation. Aircraft and armoured divisions are once more attempting an infiltration and a breakthrough of our front. But the battle has hardly commenced, and I shall tell you nothing but what General Weygand has told me: 'I am satisfied,' he said, 'with the manner in which the battle has begun and the manner in which my orders for resistance at any price are being executed.' He concluded on a grave note: "Let all spectators of the drama of the Battle of France understand, and understand quickly, that the stakes are immense. Time is passing. As for us, more than ever we have confidence in our armies and in final victory."

But there seemed little justification for the optimism of Reynaud or Weygand. Actually, on the third day (June 7) of the gigantic battle, the entire Somme front went to pieces. During the night the Germans had brought up a host of reinforcements, and as the fight developed new masses were thrown into the attack along the whole front. Once again, too, the German tanks were much in evidence. Although the French strong points

Attack
En Masse

principally the 51st (Highland) Division, were furiously engaged—as, indeed, they had been for several days earlier—in an attempt to prevent the Germans from extending their hold on the Somme bridgeheads. Although surrounded by the enemy masses, the Highlanders fought with characteristic tenacity, living up to their division's great reputation for toughness and courage. So heavy was the pressure that at certain points it became necessary to withdraw the line, but every inch of ground was bitterly contested. In blazing sunshine, in almost tropical heat, the men fought on, many of them in their shirt sleeves; "they just shake themselves and laugh," said their general after one of the periodical tornadoes of heavy artillery and machine-gun fire. (See Chapter 149.)

When M. Reynaud went to the microphone that night he declared that he came not as the bearer of bad news, as on May 21, when he

Reynaud's Hopes announced that the Germans had reached Amiens, and on May 28,

when he told of the capitulation of King Leopold. "Today, in an hour which remains grave, I have come to give you reasons for hope—not words, but facts. . . . It was Germany's most decisive enterprise," he said, "an attack in grand style. All the means which we know of have



CLOSING THE ROAD TO NAZI TRAFFIC

Here is a photograph taken on the Somme battlefield at the beginning of June, 1940. It shows British soldiers erecting a substantial anti-tank barrier across a French road in an endeavour to delay the swift advance of the German mechanized units.

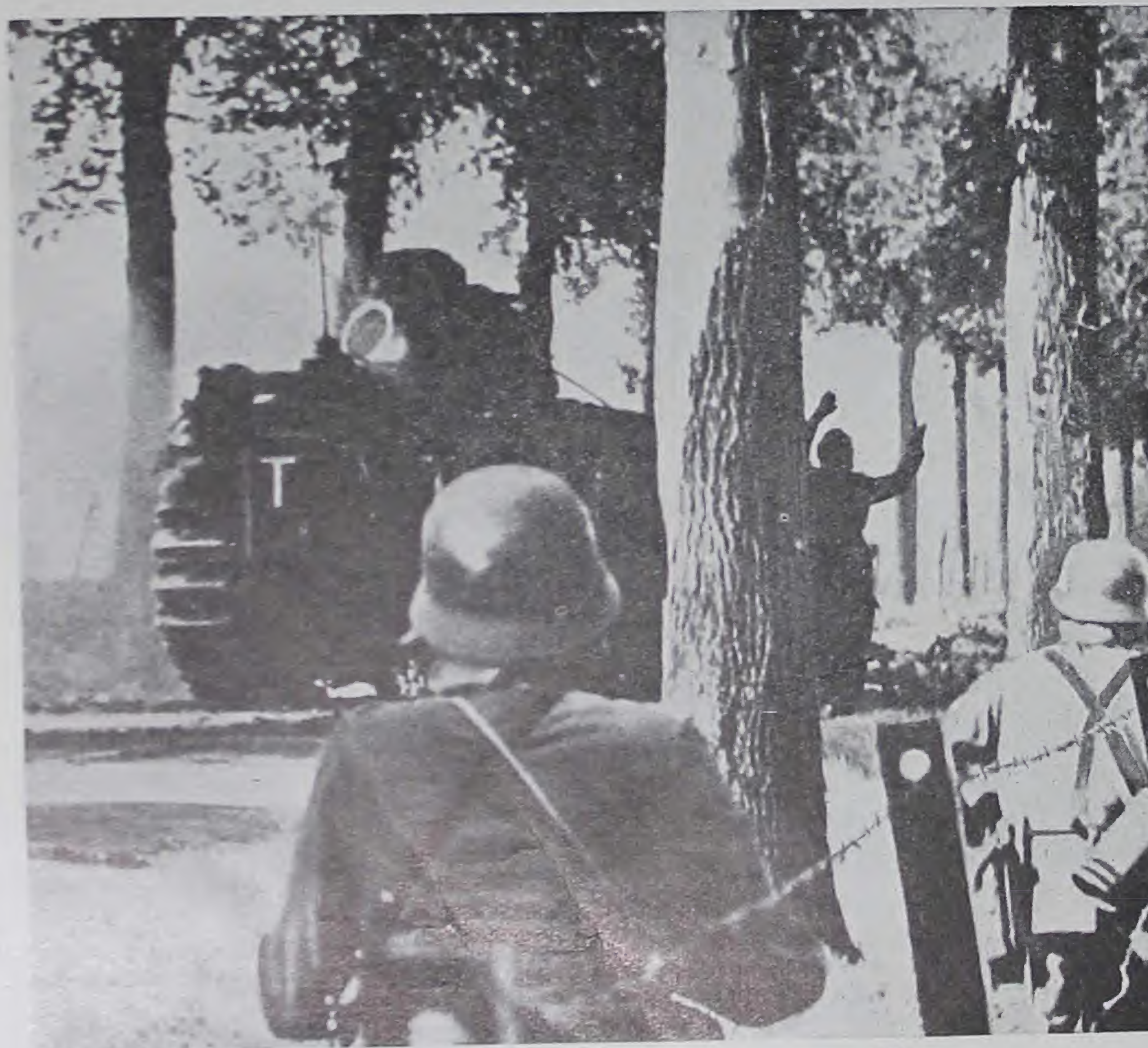
Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright



ONE CLUE TO THE FRENCH COLLAPSE

The official French photograph above, showing motorized units of the French army mounted on vehicles which would have been considered obsolete during the war of 1914-18, provides one clue to the sudden collapse of the French army in 1940. Below, a German photograph showing the capture of a French medium tank.

Photos, Section Cinéma de l'Armée; Keystone



took a heavy toll of the enemy, many of them were isolated or swept away as the battle passed on its course. Already the German High Command had given out that "the Weygand Line has been pierced along the whole front," and it was claimed that the stubborn resistance offered by the French troops had been unable to stem the vigorous attack of the German right wing on the Somme.

Particularly fierce were the German attacks against the French right wing in the sector to the north and east of Soissons, and at some points the enemy after crossing the Ailette reached the banks of the Aisne. Several detachments, indeed, managed to get across the river, but the French claimed that all the enemy elements which penetrated to the left bank were annihilated. Another fierce attack was directed south of Péronne, where the French strong points were assaulted by two Panzerdivisionen said to comprise nearly a thousand tanks. A nine-mile breach was made in the French line between Hornoy and Poix; many of the tanks succeeded in sweeping through the defences, and headed in the direction of Rouen. The German infantry, however, who attempted to support them in mass formation, made little progress. On the west near Abbeville fierce fighting continued, and a number of British tanks were thrown into the battle in an effort to stem the German advance south of the Somme. The French 10th Army (between Aumale and the coast) was cut in two and driven back westward. Near Soissons the enemy crossed the Aisne.

It was on this day that General Weygand's Order of the Day was made public. "The battle for France has begun," it said. "The order is to defend our positions without thought of retirement. **Weygand's Order of the Day** Officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the French Army, let the thought of our Fatherland, wounded by the invader, inspire you with the unshakable resolution to hold fast where you are. Examples drawn from our glorious past show that courage and determination always gain the day. Hang on to the soil of France. Look only forward; the High Command has made its preparations in order to support you from the rear. The fate of our 'Patrie,' the safeguarding of our liberties and the future of our sons depend on your steadfastness."

On the next day, June 8, the battle continued throughout the day on the whole front between the sea and the Chemin des Dames, but the Germans concentrated their main efforts on a



BORDER REGIMENT ON THE SOMME FRONT

These photographs from the Somme battlefront show men of the 4th Border Regiment during the Battle of France in June, 1940. Cut off from the main body of the B.E.F., they commandeered vehicles and made themselves into a motorized unit. Above they are seen arriving in a front-line sector in lorries. Below, taking up a position by the roadside.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright

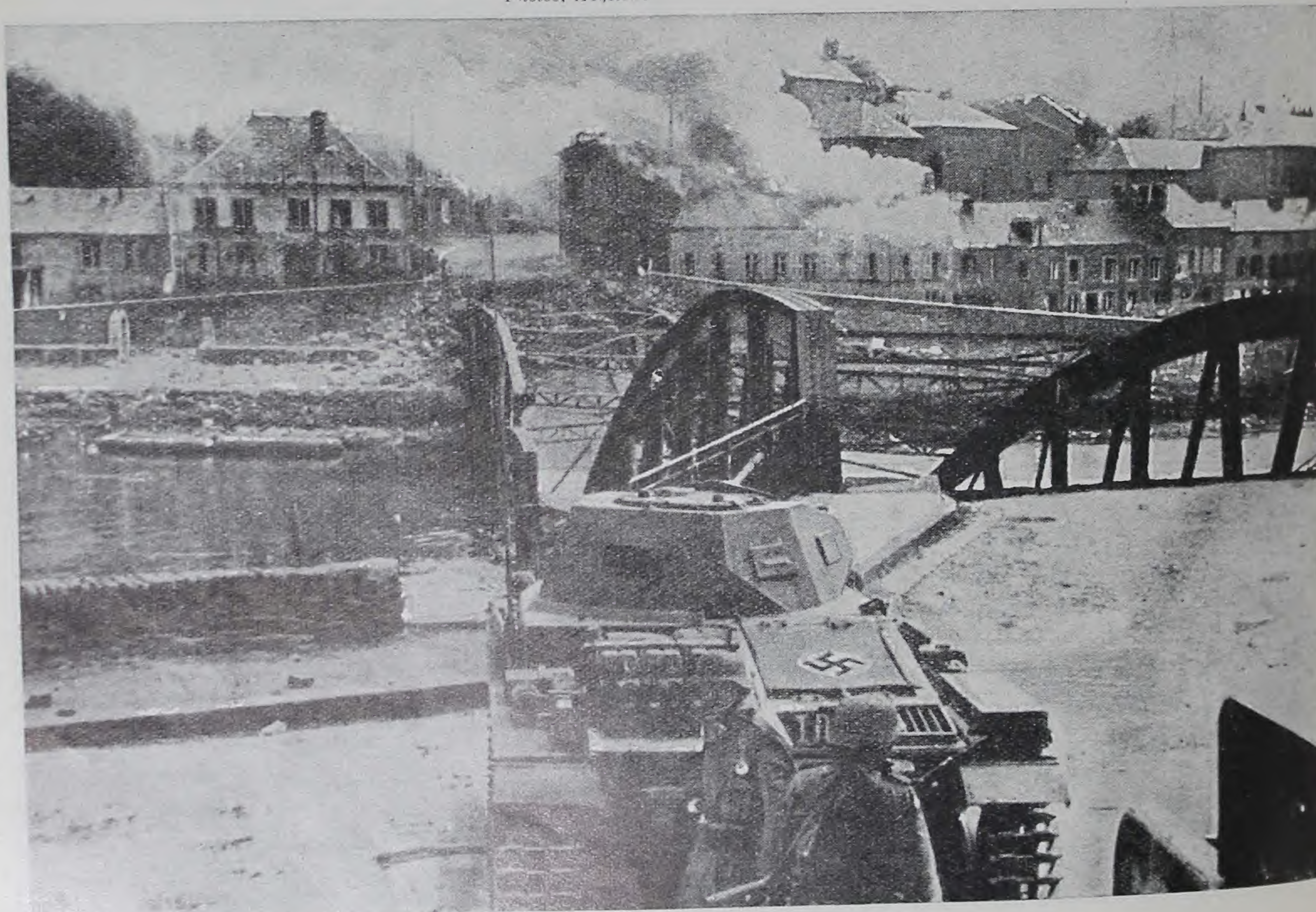




BLITZKRIEG FROM THE NAZI VIEWPOINT

These vivid scenes are German front-line pictures of the Battle of France. Above, a Nazi reconnaissance patrol advances cautiously, with rifles and grenades ready, through the French village of Ham, remembered by many men of the B.E.F. of 1916-17. Below, a big German tank awaits the arrival of the sappers before it can proceed across the river which runs through a devastated French town.

Photos, Keystone



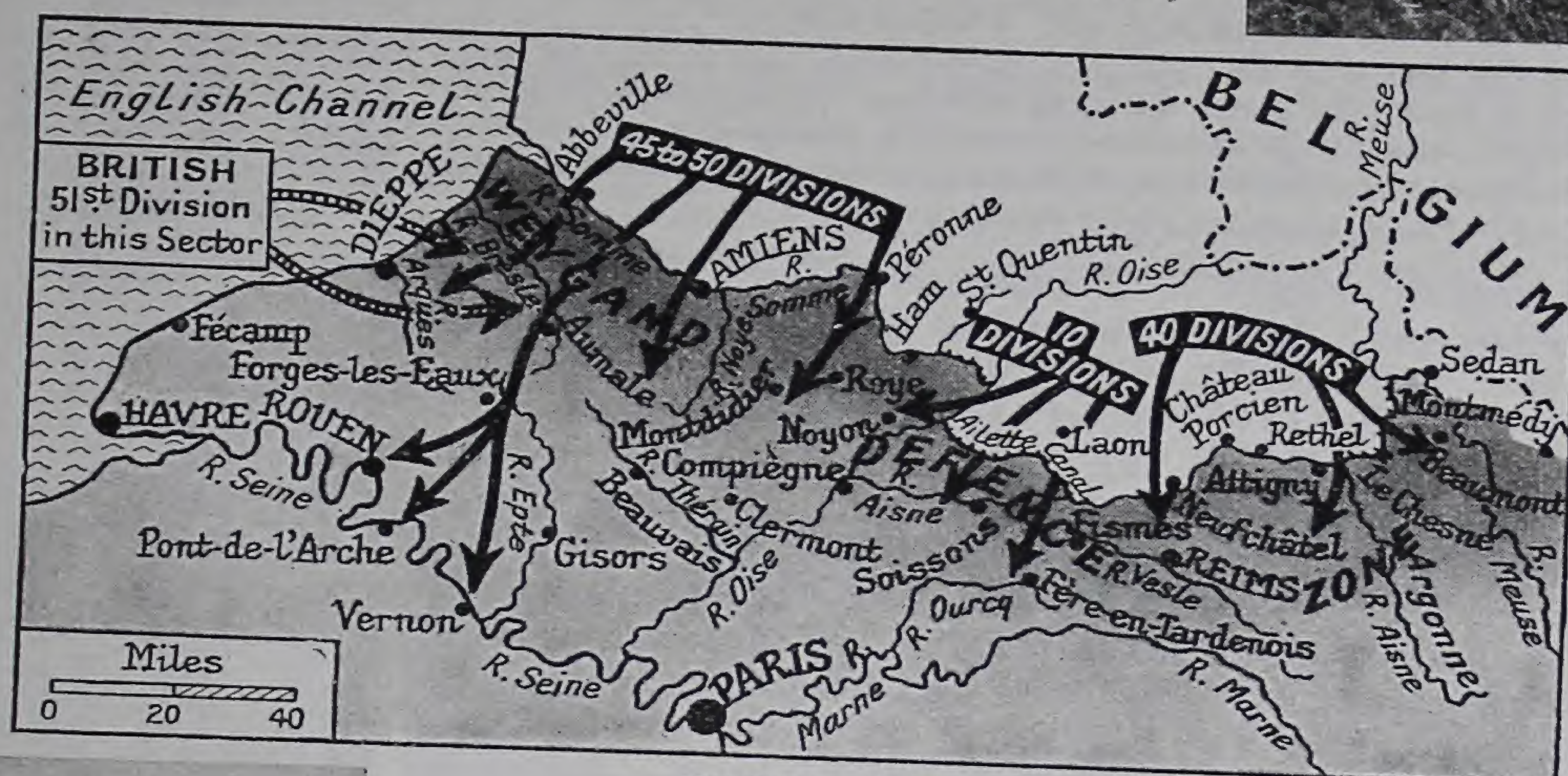
60-mile front between Aumale, 20 miles south of Abbeville, and Noyon, 27 miles south of Péronne. Report spoke of seven armoured divisions and 20 fresh infantry divisions being employed by the enemy in his onslaught, making a total of 300,000 men, and it was hardly surprising that at the close of the day the French military spokesman in Paris spoke of a "slight strategic withdrawal"—words which cloaked what was in effect an abandonment of the entire line of the Somme. The French communiqué said that enemy infantry divisions which had hitherto remained in the rear had now entered the line and, reinforced by powerful artillery, had added their fire power to that of the armoured divisions already engaged. "Our divisions have succeeded in limiting the progress of this disproportionate effort with their own effectives, which are making a withdrawal manoeuvre in the prescribed directions."

The French 10th Army suffered fresh defeats; some of its units were taken prisoner at St. Valéry-en-Caux (see pages

PONT DE L'ARCHE

The old Norman village of Pont de l'Arche, of which the picturesque Rue de l'Abbaye Sans Toile is seen below, was the scene of heavy fighting during the Battle of France in June, 1940.

Photo, E.N.A.



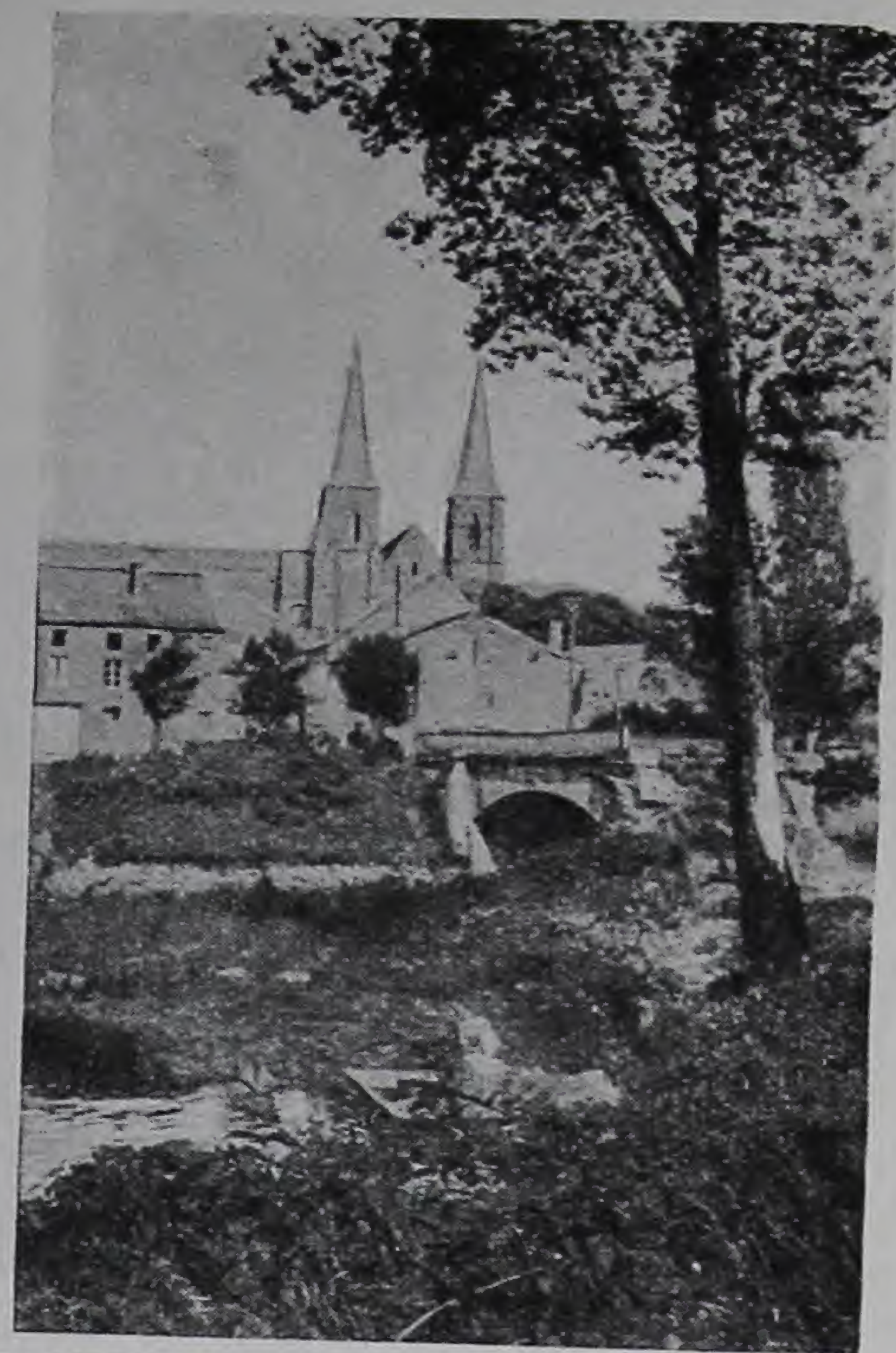
WHERE THE NAZIS STRUCK

This map of the Weygand Defence Zone shows the main points from which the Germans developed their offensive between Sedan and the Channel during the Battle of France. Compare with map in page 923.

armoured units, numbering perhaps 200 machines, had not only reached Forges-les-Eaux, between Dieppe and Beauvais, but had made their appearance in the region of Rouen; indeed, they had actually reached the outskirts of the old Norman capital, and at Pont de l'Arche, a few miles upstream, they had endeavoured, although so far in vain, to cross the Seine. Farther east between Montdidier and Noyon it was stated that the enemy had been much less successful, and it was claimed that in Champagne an attack which the enemy had launched at dawn on a front between Château Porcien and the Argonne had been completely stemmed. But the enemy offensive on either side of Rethel was so far successful that a bridgehead was won on the right. Whenever occasion offered the French had counter-attacked,

954 and 1563), while others (on the right flank) retired to the Oise near Pontoise. To the east of the Oise enemy pressure was also accentuated, and there, too, fresh divisions, supported by armoured units, enabled the enemy to make considerable progress, including a foothold on the heights south of the Aisne. Thus it was admitted that the Aisne, too, had proved an insufficient bar to the German advance.

The fighting on the next day, Sunday, June 9, was said to be the most intense in the "greatest battle in history," and for the most part it seemed that it had gone in favour of the French. It was officially claimed in Paris that a thousand German tanks had been destroyed in the preceding five days of battle, and that the losses inflicted on the German attackers totalled some 400,000. The communiqué spoke of diminishing enemy pressure on the Bresle, although there was the significant admission that the enemy



FORGES-LES-EAUX

Forges-les-Eaux, a village on the Amiens-Rouen road (above), was the point from which the Nazis directed the thrust of their armoured units towards the Rouen region.

Photo, E.N.A.

but it could not be denied that they were placed in a position of deadly peril.

All through that terrific week the British on the left fought magnificently. "If any

army has ever pulled its weight in a really desperate battle against great odds our men of the 'little B.E.F.' telegraphed "Eye-witness" from his post with the British Army in France on June 10, "have done it. They have fought for days in intense heat against overwhelming forces under a hail of bombs from machines shrieking downwards at over 300 miles an hour. They have been swept again and again and again by a storm of machine-gun bullets from the air. Tanks have harried them from front and rear. Shells from every type of weapon, from heavy artillery to trench mortars, have crashed round them. Machine-gun and rifle fire from the infantry have been only incidentals.

"At some places the Germans have launched infantry in such masses that our men have become physically fatigued





SIGNS AND SYMBOLS OF SACRIFICE

Rethel, a French town which figured in the Champagne battles of the war of 1914-18, was destroyed by the Germans in June, 1940, during the Battle of France. Above, a scene in one of the streets of the town. Right, a photograph wirelessly from Berlin to New York, showing Hitler and General Keitel at the Canadian War Memorial, Vimy Ridge, after the fall of Northern France.

Photos, Associated Press; Keystone

with the effort of continually firing—their rifles and machine-guns have become almost red-hot. Through all this terrific ordeal they have stuck to it splendidly.

"Today, their faces black with a week's beard and dust caked on sweating skin, they are still grinning, still ready to make another stand. From youngest to oldest they have

Tribute to shown supreme courage
the B.E.F. and endurance. Men

from all parts of the country have fought in these fierce battles with dogged pluck. Those who have distinguished themselves include men from every area north of the Tweed, Highlanders and Lowlanders alike. Townsfolk from Glasgow and Edinburgh and Aberdeen, Perth fishermen from the North Sea coast, crofters from the Highlands and remote hamlets of the Western Isles—all have fought with characteristic Scots bravery and kept their characteristic Scots philosophy and good humour."

On the day before, continued "Eye-witness," the British troops had fought fierce rearguard actions against the steadily advancing German tanks and infantry. They had been driven back by greatly superior forces, yet they held their positions tenaciously until the order to withdraw was given.

Again General Weygand spoke to his soldiers in an Order of the Day, issued on that same Sunday, June 9. He said:

"The German offensive has now been launched on the whole front from the sea to Montmédy. Tomorrow it will stretch as far as Switzerland. The order still is for each man to fight without thought of retreat, looking straight ahead from where the Command has placed him. The Commander-in-Chief is fully aware of the valiant efforts of which the armies engaged and the Air Force are giving a magnificent example. I thank them. France demands still more of them. Officers, non-commissioned officers and men, the very safety of 'la Patrie' demands of you not only your courage but all the resolution, initiative and fighting spirit of which you are capable. The enemy has suffered considerable losses. He will soon reach the end of his effort. We have now reached the last quarter of the hour. Hold fast."

Hold fast! But how difficult it was to "tenir bon" in the circumstances in which the French armies found themselves on that critical Monday! This was the day that Mussolini chose to declare war. From the sea to the Oise the Germans continued their pressure; they crossed the Lower Seine at Vernon, south-east of Rouen, and at other places; through the terrible gaps at Abbeville, Amiens and Péronne an uncounted host of tanks plunged to engage in an orgy of destruction along the Aisne, east of Soissons; and in the direction of Rheims they continued

their attack. From the bridgehead gained at Rethel the enemy launched a big attack with tanks on June 10. The French 3rd Armoured Division beat off the Panzers, but none the less a withdrawal that night (June 10-11) became imperative, and the French drew back to Rheims. Elsewhere in the line, Villers-Cotterets had been relinquished to the enemy by the French 6th Army, and after forcing the crossing of the Ourcq the Germans got as far as Château Thierry.

Just before he told of Italy's entry into the war, M. Reynaud, in his broadcast of June 10, gave a brief review of the position. "For six days and five nights our soldiers, our airmen, and the Royal Air Force," he said, "have been facing



an enemy superior in numbers and armaments. In this war, which is a war of strong points grouped in depth, our armies have been manoeuvring in retreat. They did not abandon any strong point until they had inflicted cruel losses on the enemy." Then, after a scathing denunciation of Mussolini's action, the Premier concluded: "in the course of her long and glorious history France has passed through more severe trials and yet has always astonished the world. France cannot die."

NAZI AIR TACTICS IN THE LOW COUNTRIES AND IN FRANCE : R.A.F. v. LUFTWAFFE

Air Tactics of the Invasion—The 'Sandwich' Technique—Parachutists and Troop Carriers—Attacks on Refugees—Bombing of Rotterdam—Dive-bombers Against Troops : Preparing the Way for German Armoured Divisions—Work of the R.A.F. : Operational Difficulties in the Retreat—Belgian Capitulation—Saving the B.E.F.—Covering the Evacuation from Dunkirk—Italy Enters the War—The French Collapse—Air Situation Surveyed

FRESH aspects of the scope and influence of air power had been revealed during the Russo-Finnish campaign and during the German campaign in Norway, but it is true to say that a complete view of the function of the aeroplane in modern war did not appear until the invasion of the Low Countries by Germany on May 10.

Norway had indicated that prodigious feats of troop and supply transport were possible to a country well stocked with aircraft. Finland had given some tentative indications of the capabilities of parachute troops. But when the Germans swooped on Holland, air war immediately took on a far bigger scale.

Two major duties were assigned to the Luftwaffe, though both of them contributed to the advance of the land armies: (1) air preparation and support for advancing troops, and (2) simultaneous disorganizing attack from the rear.

Reduced to its simplest form, the German method may be described as a sandwich technique. While pressure was brought to bear in front of the advancing army, the rear of the defending troops and their communications were harassed by parachutists and by troops landed by transport aeroplanes.

The parachute troops were in reality fulfilling the role of cavalry on a much more decisive line. An attack from the front on a certain sector would be preceded by a tremendous dive-bombing onslaught on the main defended positions intended to clear the way for mechanized units, and at the same time the parachute troops would drop behind the defended positions, cut telephone lines, harass supply columns, and even attack directly with small arms the rearguards of the defenders.

There can be little doubt that the attack on Rotterdam will be regarded as a classic example of this form of war. Waalhaven aerodrome, Rotterdam's former civil airport, was chosen as the focus of the special air operations, though air operations of a secondary kind were spread over a very wide area.

Amsterdam, for instance, was subjected to heavy and repeated raids, and at the time of the main operations in Holland Royal Air Force aerodromes in France were attacked with the intention of hampering aerial counter-attacks. But it was at Waalhaven that the battle for the rear of the Dutch positions, as it might be called, concentrated.

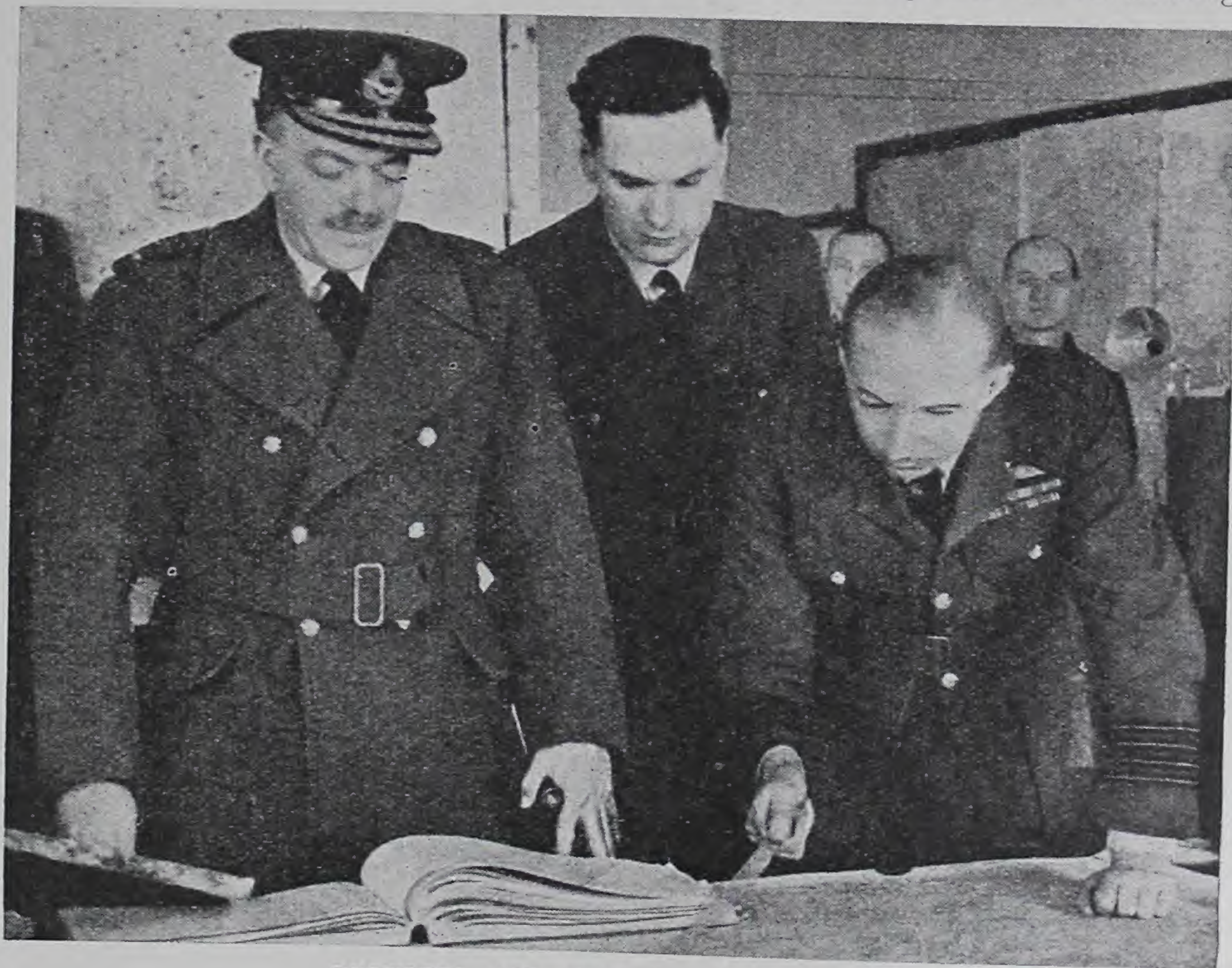
Parachute troops were rained down there, and troop-carrying aircraft, chiefly of the Junkers 52 type, but also including some four-engined machines of another make, landed. The Germans moved with great speed, and it was their speed that helped them to hold out in spite of intensive raiding by the R.A.F.

For directly Waalhaven was seized strong forces of Royal Air Force bombers attacked it and the German forces assembling there. Many of the German troop-carrying aeroplanes were

destroyed on the ground. And the Dutch, in a determined counter-attack, did manage to gain a footing there again. But it was short-lived. The Germans poured in men by air, and secured a grip on the airport which could not be loosed.

The choice of airports as the landing ground for parachute troops has a twofold purpose in that not only is the ground suited to the landing, but it serves automatically as a good base for further operations. Supplies can be landed there as well as reinforcements.

That is why the Germans showed such vigour, both in Norway and in Holland, in their early attacks on aerodromes. They regarded the aerodromes as keys to their subsequent operations. It is probable that the order was to secure Waalhaven at any cost, and that even the landing of 16 Junkers aeroplanes at Valkenburg,



BRITISH AIR CHIEF IN FRANCE

Air Marshal A. S. Barratt (left) was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the British Air Forces in France as from January 9, 1940. Previously the R.A.F. in France had been made up of two separate groups: the Advanced Air Striking Force under Air Vice-Marshal P. H. L. Playfair and the Army Air Component under Air Vice-Marshal C. H. Blount.

Photo, French Official



This British pilot's defiant "trade-mark" speaks for itself. Top centre: Badge of the famous French Stork squadron revived from the last war.



British lion trampling swastika; two Nazi flags "cancelled." Left circle: French Sioux emblem—feathers added for enemy 'planes shot down. Right circle: German.



Mr. Chamberlain's umbrella was a favourite theme in German devices. See above and elsewhere in this page.



Animals, both heraldic and naturalistic, rivalled jeering demons for popularity on other German machines.



HERALDRY OF THE AIR

Among various forms of artistic expression inspired by the war the distinctive insignia adopted by certain pilots and units of the opposing air forces were of sufficient interest to merit record. Some of the emblems were both ingeniously conceived and skilfully executed, and it is notable that among the German designs political motifs predominated and the national love of heraldic display was well in evidence. With the exception of those otherwise described, the examples here given are German.



each one with twenty infantry soldiers, and the attempt to capture Queen Wilhelmina were nothing more than a diversion designed to throw the Dutch rear into still greater confusion.

The Royal Air Force gave the strongest support it could to the Dutch defence; but owing to the fact that the Netherlands' strict interpretation of neutrality prevented any staff talks from taking place before the invasion, the effectiveness of the support was necessarily limited.

But roads and bridges in the Maas-tricht area were bombed and much damage done to German communications. Many different types of aircraft were used. In the attacks on Waalhaven the new Bristol Beauforts came into action as well as the much older Fairey Swordfish biplanes. The R.A.F. worked incessantly and the German air force suffered its first big losses.

It was on May 14 also that the Dutch Commander-in-Chief ordered his troops to cease fire in all areas except Zeeland. He had been influenced in his decision by the ruthless air bombardment of Rotterdam itself, of Utrecht and other cities. In Rotterdam a selected area near the centre of the city had been systematically bombed by Junkers dive-bombers and the casualties had amounted to the hideous figure of 30,000 dead in the space of half an hour (see pages 843-5).

Four days had seen the breaking up of the resistance of the Netherlands forces. Those forces had fought gallantly; but they had been faced with a highly developed and, in some ways, new use of the air arm, and their resistance had been smashed inside and out. The Germans, however, having acquired some impetus in this campaign, did not slacken. On the contrary, they hurled themselves with increased vigour

at the junction of the Allied armies, here concentrating their main air strength.

It is instructive to note here a slight modification in their tactics. When they turned upon the main Allied armies, the British, Belgian and French, they did not make use of the sandwich plan. It seems that they recognized that the Allied rear was better defended and that parachute troops would have much greater difficulty in operating than they had in the Netherlands.

Parachute troops were landed here and there behind the Allied lines, but not in great numbers, and they were mostly dealt with easily. It may be also that the operations of such troops were checked at the source by the intensive bombing attacks of the Royal Air Force.

Road and rail communications in the Low Countries and in Luxemburg were heavily bombed, and May 16 saw the weightiest offensive yet launched by the British air forces. German fuel supplies were also attacked. The French Armée de l'Air cooperated well, especially in the Meuse operations.

But again the German method showed signs of prevailing. Clouds of the Junkers 87 dive-bombers, aircraft of no very advanced performance characteristics, but solidly built and capable of being turned out in large numbers, prepared the way for the advances of the German armoured divisions.

They swooped on the defences and either destroyed them or forced those manning them to take cover. Immediately the German tanks swept

**Biggest
R.A.F.
Offensive**



BEAUFORTS DROP THEIR BOMBS

Above are a Beaufort bomber and R.A.F. pilots at a West Country aerodrome. Aircraft of this type wrought havoc on the Waalhaven aerodrome at Rotterdam while the Germans were in possession, as can be seen in the photograph, right.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright; Fox

Another feature of the German war method emerged during this period. It concerned the military use of refugees. M. Pierlot, the Belgian Prime Minister, stated on May 14 that refugees had been machine-gunned by low-flying German aeroplanes. Later it became clear that the German plan was to choke the roads behind the Allied forces with fleeing refugees and to do what they could among these refugees to create panic, the ulterior object being to hamper military movements.





ABBEVILLE AERODROME RECEIVES A VISIT

Here is evidence of R.A.F. activity at Abbeville aerodrome after it had fallen into German hands. Bombs can be seen bursting all over the landing ground and among the hangars near the cross-roads. The target has been well straddled.

Photo, British Official : Crown Copyright

forward to seize the positions. If the tanks were held up, they took cover and signalled for air aid. It was this collaboration between the dive-bombers and the ground forces that enabled the Germans to advance with spectacular rapidity.

It was on May 17 that General Gamelin issued his famous "conquer or die" order to the French troops. It provoked miracles of heroism, but heroism could not hold the combination of air and land machinery that the Germans were using. The line began to bend. At this stage everybody on the Allied side realized that the position was desperate. Mr. Churchill proclaimed the policy of unrelenting assault, and Paris announced that General Weygand had taken General Gamelin's place as Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Armies.

The Royal Air Force alone seemed capable of dealing with the German forces. Wherever it met the enemy it proved successful. At the Landrecies bulge Blenheims bombed incessantly. They used shallow dives and launched their bombs at about 1,500 feet. But air defensive action could not hold the German advance, and on May 21 the Germans claimed to have occupied Amiens, Arras, and Abbeville.

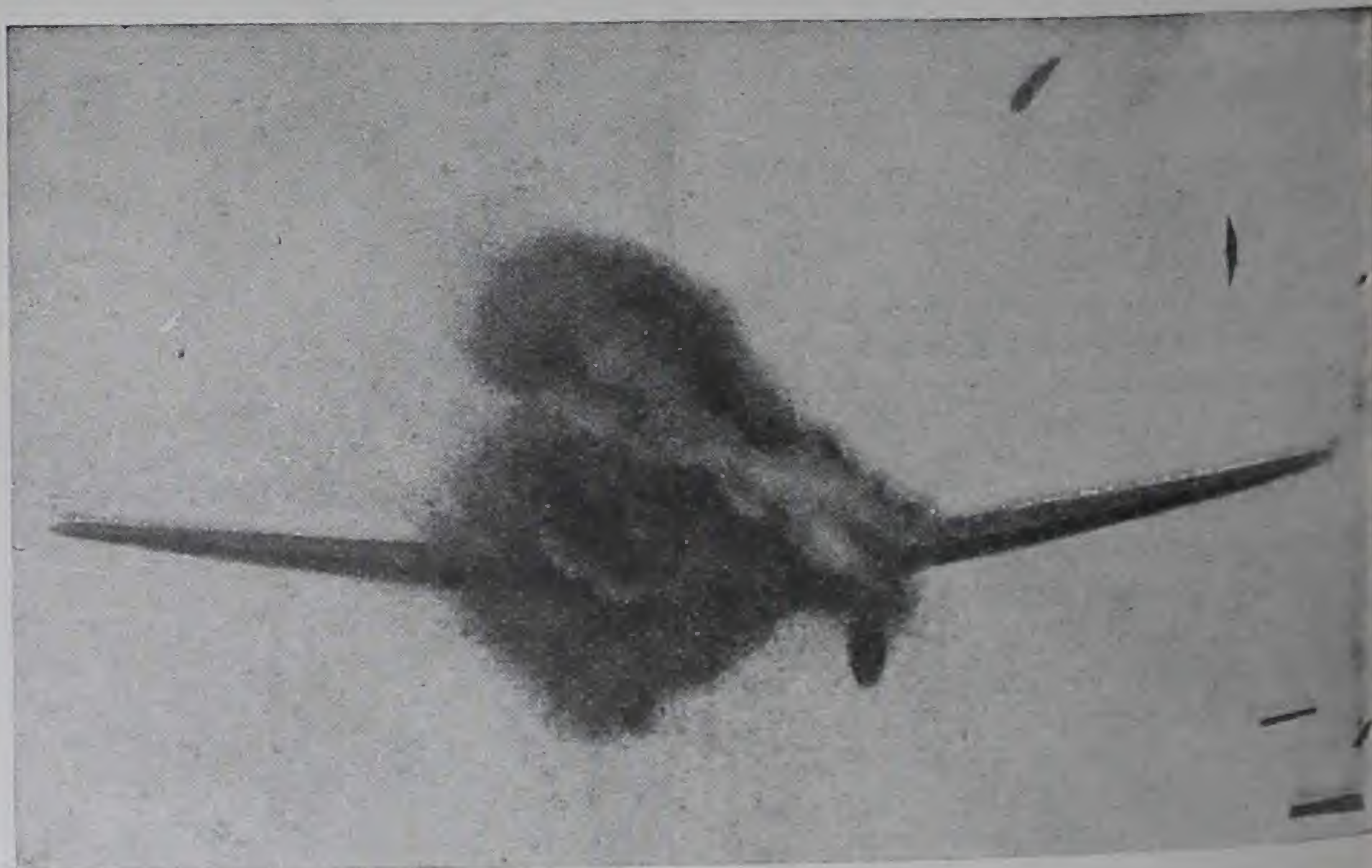
At this time the Royal Air Force was disposed in a manner which had been designed to enable it to give the utmost support to the Allied armies without weakening it for the defence of Great Britain and without taking away its capacity for independent bombing

action. With the British Expeditionary Force there was the Air Component, which is best regarded as a small air force on its own, with fighters, bombers and Army Cooperation machines. Also in France there was an Advanced Air Striking Force. This latter group was intended for developing to the full the offensive powers of our bombing aeroplanes in the operations on the French front.

The method worked well, and it was possible for the Air Ministry to state on May 24 that at least 500 aircraft had been lost by the enemy in France and Belgium in one week. Since the invasion of the Low Countries it was estimated that the enemy's losses had been 1,500 aircraft.

If it is possible to sum up in a few words the air situation at this critical period, it may perhaps be said that the Royal Air Force was proving superior to the Luftwaffe whenever it met it, but that it was hampered by lack of numbers. It was its weight of numbers, together with the usual German disregard for losses, that enabled the German air support for the armoured divisions to be continued on a sufficiently big scale to maintain the advance towards the coast.

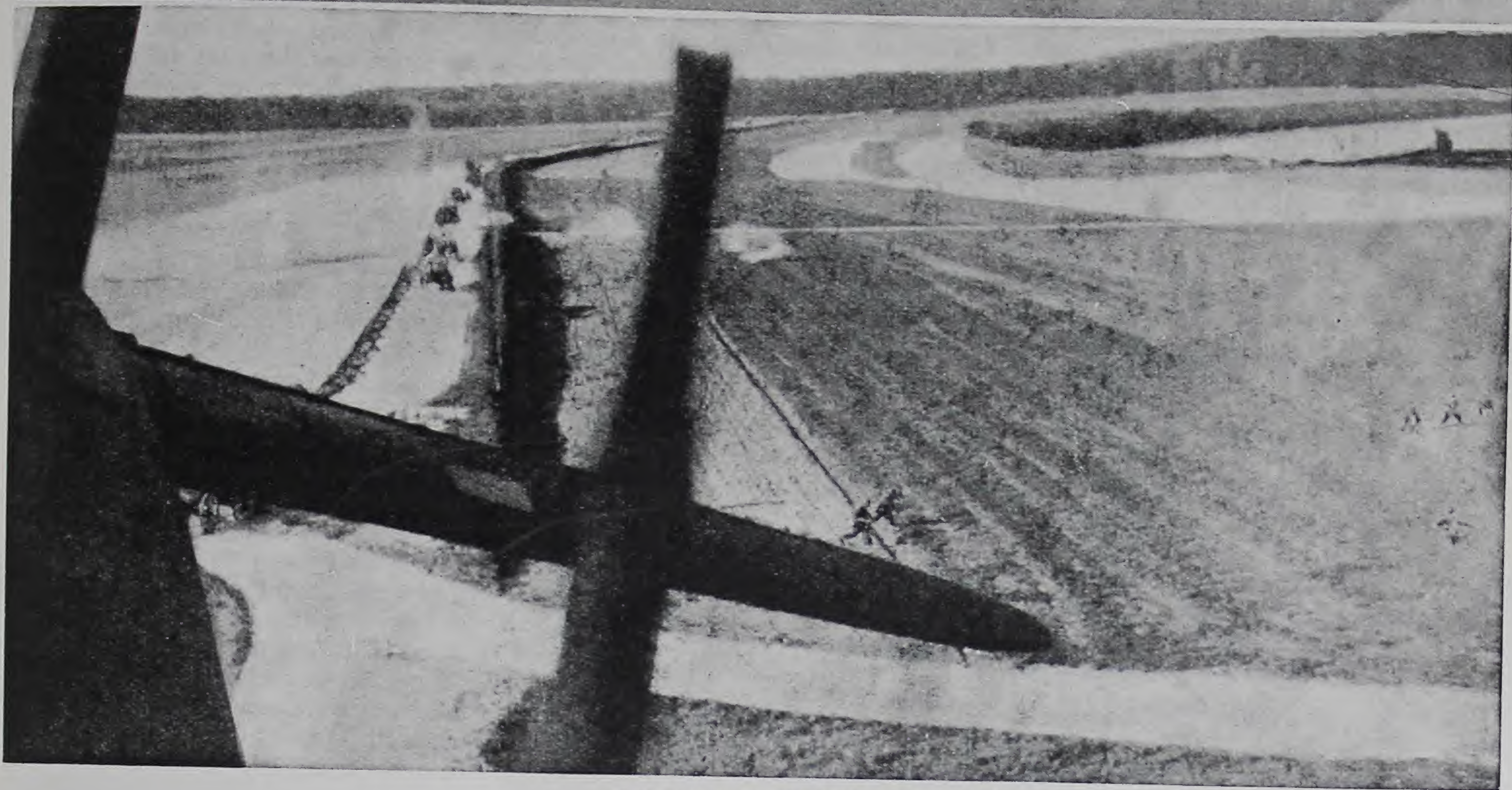
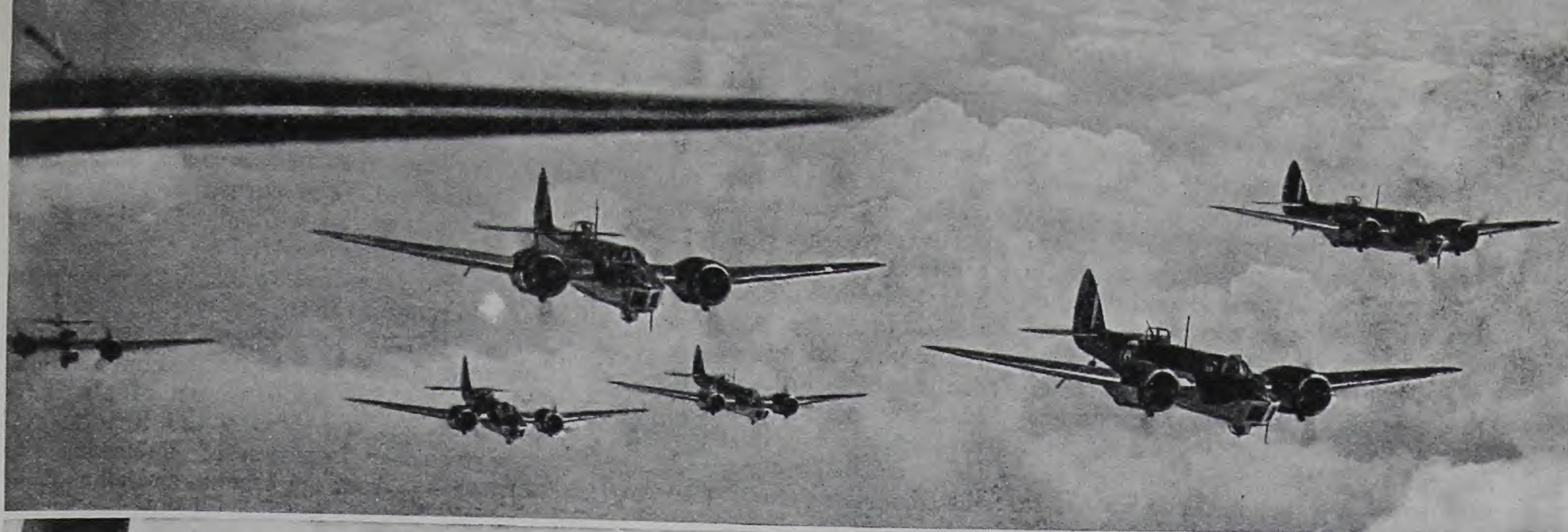
With this advance the Royal Air Force operational difficulties inevitably increased. Squadrons were forced to move from their aerodromes, and this brought with it the associated problems of supply and maintenance. The Royal Air Force ground staffs proved their worth at this period, and no praise can be too high for the way in which our



HEINKEL'S FIERY END

This amazing photograph of a Heinkel III in flames was taken from the British aircraft which had engaged it in combat. The Nazi 'plane is well ablaze and, as can be seen, is disintegrating in mid-air.

Photo, British Official : Crown Copyright



THE R.A.F. WERE ACTIVE IN BELGIUM

At the top of the page can be seen a formation of Bristol Blenheim Mark IV fighter-bombers, and immediately beneath is a photograph of a low-level attack made by Fairey Battles on enemy transport columns. Below, another Nazi transport column in Belgium, after the R.A.F. bombers had smashed it.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright; Keystone



aircraft were maintained and fed with all necessary supplies under conditions of mounting difficulty and danger.

The Fairey Battles, which had gone out to France on the night before the declaration of war and which had been held in readiness during the whole of the long period of suspended activity that followed the declaration of war, were now working continuously. They were used for dive-bombing German troop concentrations and armoured columns. Meanwhile, the Fleet Air Arm, which had been chiefly engaged on the Norwegian coast, came into the picture in the battle of France. It launched a series of strong attacks on enemy positions along the French and Belgian coasts.

deserted by the King of the Belgians. General Georges, Chief of Staff to the Allied Generalissimo Weygand, issued special congratulations to the R.A.F. on the way it was fighting.

His reference was directed chiefly at a heroic action when an essential bridge, heavily defended, had been blown up by R.A.F. bombers. The crews had been volunteers and out of four crews only one man returned. But the bridge was successfully destroyed. This action led to the granting of the first Victoria Crosses gained in the war during 1939 by the Royal Air Force. (See illus. p. 806.)

On May 30 a new type of British fighting aeroplane came into large-scale action as a complete squadron for the

Expeditionary Force, most of which had been caught in this loop. And it seemed to many military observers at the time that nothing could save the force. The onrush of the German troops was so swift, and the air support which they received so effective, that there appeared to be little chance of taking off the troops by sea.

Nevertheless, the attempt was made by means of a brilliant improvisation. A fleet of small vessels of all kinds was got together by the Royal Navy with the intention of embarking the troops from the beaches as well as from the harbour (see full account in Chapter 90). The task placed upon the Royal Air Force was the most difficult it had yet been asked to undertake: no less than the protection of these embarking and virtually defenceless troops and of the ships, large and small, used to get them away.

Since the German dive-bombers had been the spearhead of all the movements across France and Flanders, and had inflicted great damage even on troops armed with full anti-aircraft equipment and having trench or other protection, the prospect of "roofing in" the embarkation points with British fighters so that the destruction of the men might be prevented, seemed remote.

But the Royal Air Force responded to the call with a courage and efficiency which made the world marvel. Fighter patrols were maintained continuously over the retreating Allied troops, and when the German bombers endeavoured to get through they were met so vehemently that their losses mounted to such figures that they were forced to give ground. Nothing like this had ever before been seen in air war.

On May 31 official announcements were made that a large number of troops had been successfully withdrawn. On this day 56 enemy aircraft were destroyed for the loss of sixteen British fighters. The German bombers were given huge fighter escorts, but they were still prevented from doing their task. British soldiers who had been evacuated spoke of the lack of British aeroplanes, but in fact those aeroplanes were working incessantly to intercept and destroy enemy aircraft before they reached the troops.

On June 1, 78 German machines were brought down, and at the same time British heavy bombers attacked military objectives in Western Germany. Medium bombers attacked enemy communications and hampered by all means the constricting movement round the beleaguered Allied troops.



AMERICAN BOMBER IN BATTLE OF FRANCE

During the battles on the Western Front in May and June, 1940, a certain number of American bombers were delivered to and went into action with the French Armée de l'Air. Above, one of the American aircraft being loaded up by French mechanics.

Photo. Wide World

British fighters were reaffirming their technical superiority over the enemy, and on May 28 the Spitfires and Hurricanes had their best day since the invasion of the Low Countries, when they shot down or damaged 79 German aeroplanes for a loss of fourteen. The first German machine, a Messerschmitt 109, was brought down at six in the morning, and the last on this day, a Dornier 215, at nine in the evening.

It was on this day, however, that the Allied cause received its severest shock when it was announced that King Leopold of the Belgians had ordered the Belgian army to capitulate. The R.A.F. was thereupon called on to intensify still further its efforts to save the British and French forces now

first time, though it had previously worked in collaboration with other aircraft. It was the Boulton Paul Defiant turret fighter, and the squadron of twelve machines shot down 37 enemy aircraft without loss to itself. (See illus. p. 814.)

This action, as the others then developing, must be looked on as part of the air campaign associated with the evacuation from Dunkirk. The Allied forces had been beleaguered as a result of the swift advance of the German mechanized columns. The bulge in the Allied line had been extended until it reached the sea, so that a loop was formed in which the Allied troops were caught.

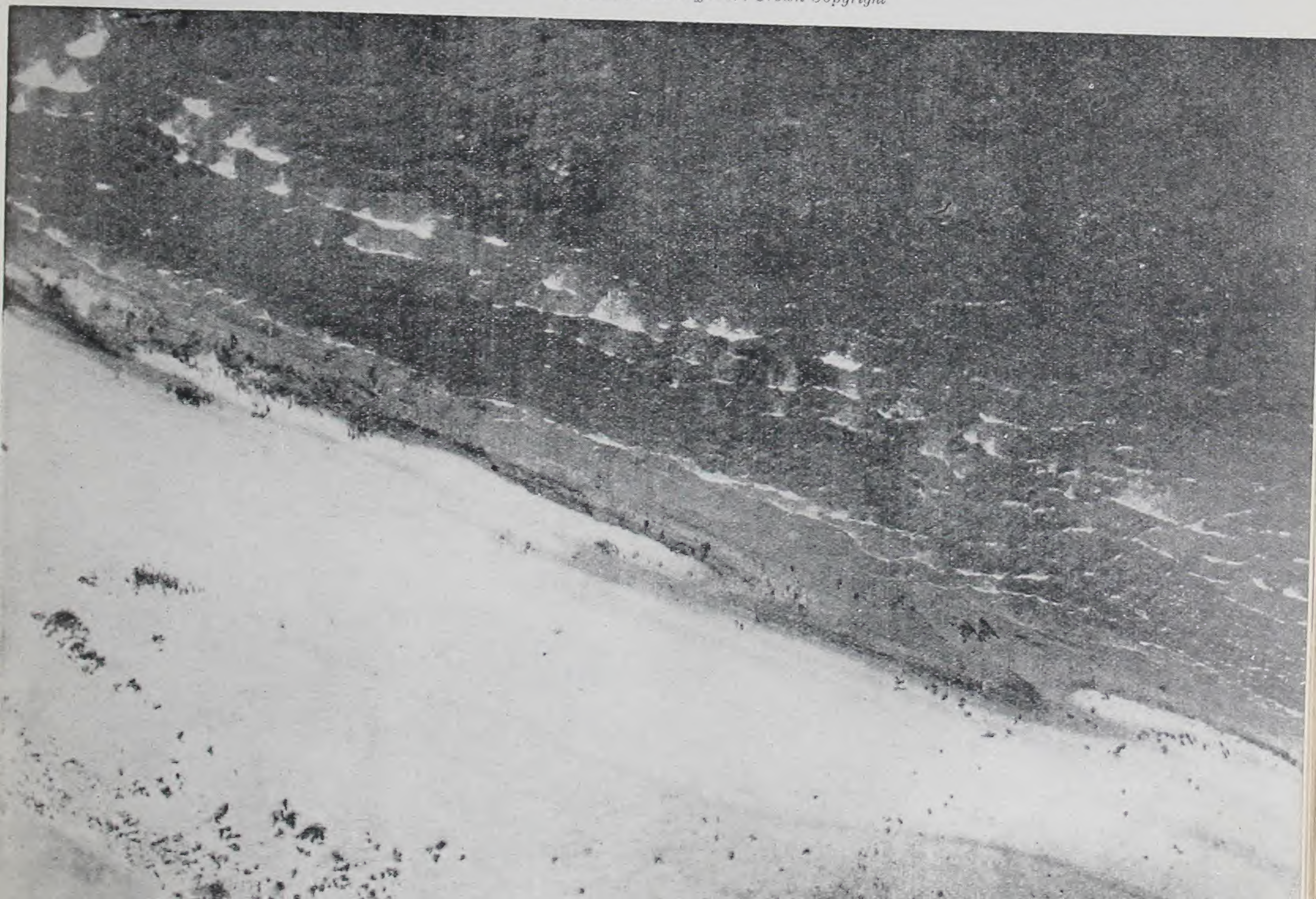
The Germans announced their intention of "destroying" the British



DUNKIRK : THE MIRACULOUS EVACUATION

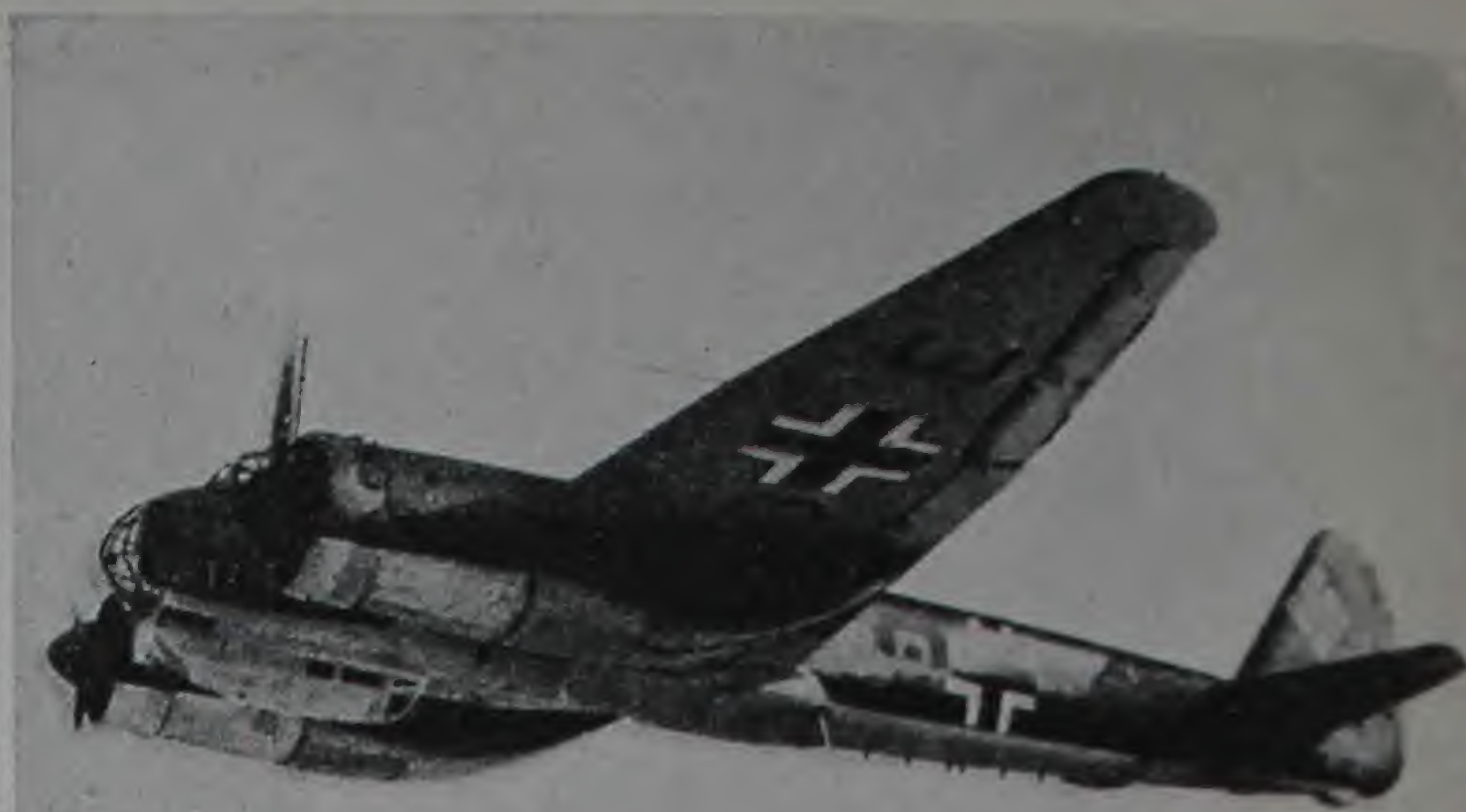
Here are two remarkable photographs taken from the air during the evacuation of the B.E.F from Dunkirk. The upper one shows oil tanks near the shore blazing furiously, while a Lockheed Hudson of the Coastal Command flies past on patrol. Below, part of the beach about four miles east of Dunkirk, with hundreds of soldiers waiting to be taken off.

Photos, British Official : Crown Copyright

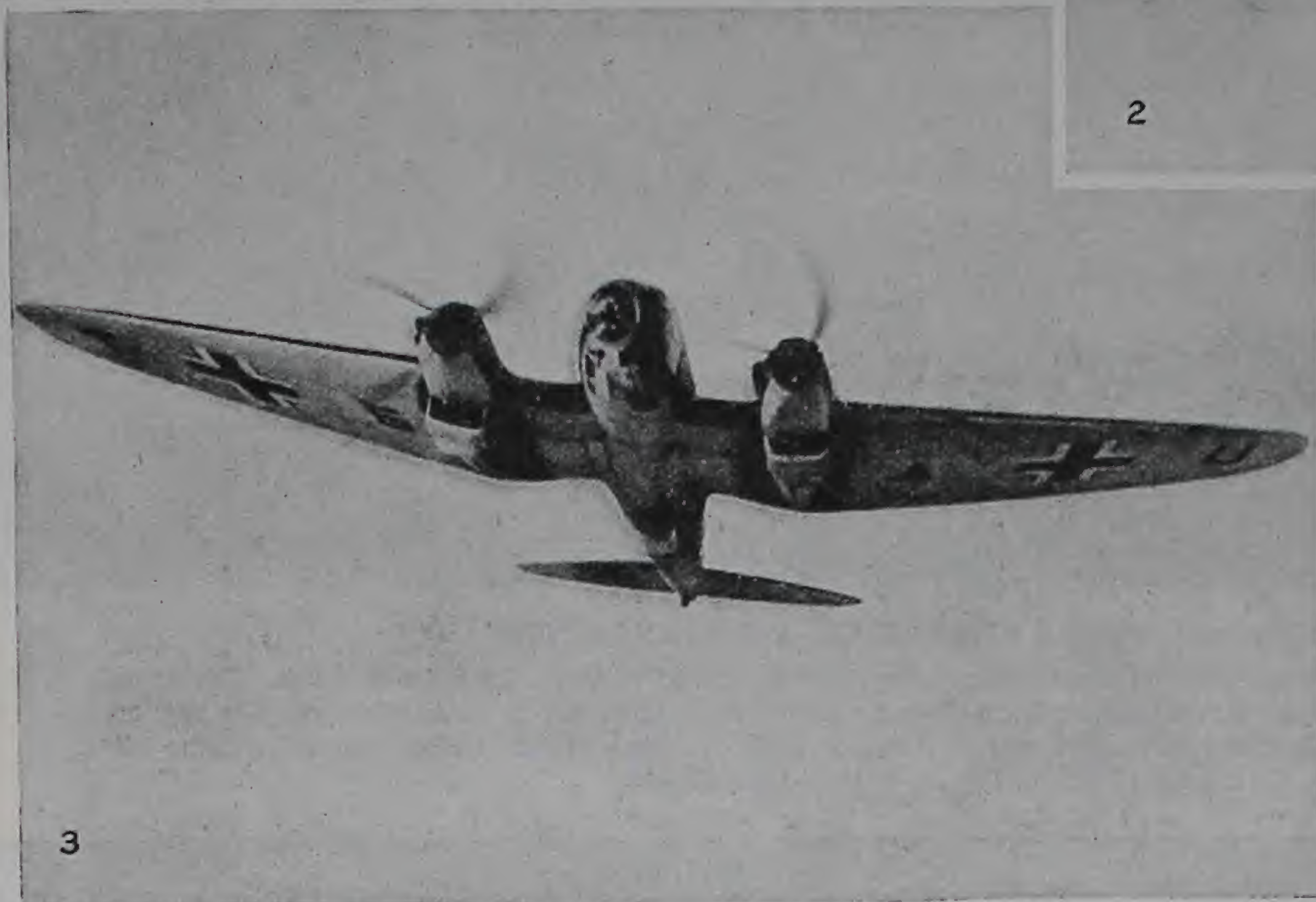




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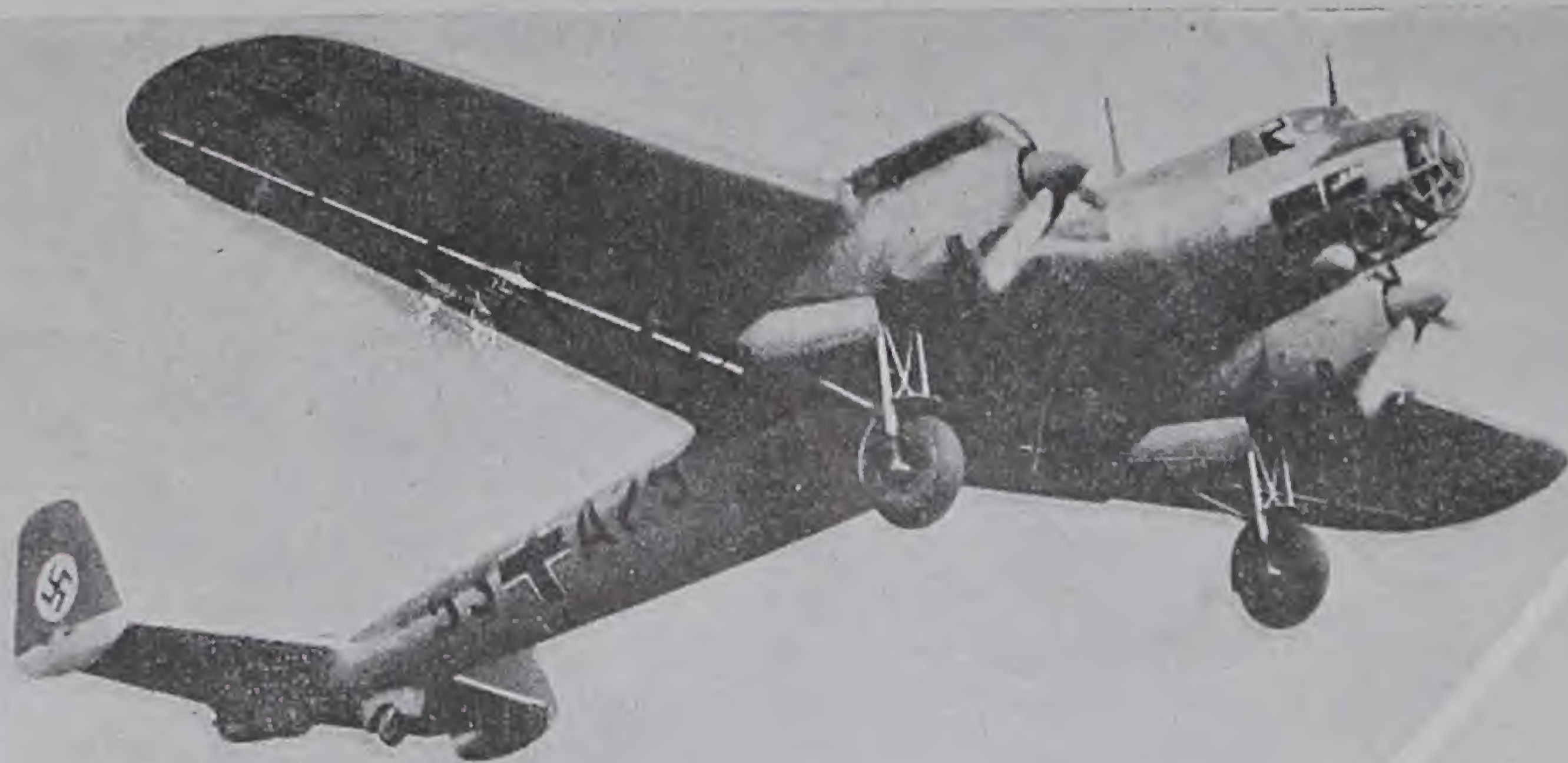


4

PRIDE OF THE LUFTWAFFE

Here are some of the main types of aircraft used by the Germans during the Battle of France
 1, Junkers Ju 87 dive-bomber, two-seater monoplane. 2, Junkers Ju 88 twin-engine bomber.
 3, Heinkel 111 twin-engine fighter and reconnaissance 'plane. 4, Messerschmitt Me 110
 twin-engine fighter. 5, Dornier Do 17 twin-engine bomber. 6, Dornier Do 215 twin-
 engine bombing and reconnaissance 'plane.

Photos, Keystone; Associated Press; "The Aeroplane"



5



6

The Germans, robbed of their prey at Dunkirk by the splendid cooperation of the three arms, Navy, Army, and Air Force, did not pause, but turned at once to the advance through France. This was heralded by the first large-scale air raid on Paris. This occurred on June 3, when enemy aeroplanes, estimated at seventeen, dropped bombs and, according to the statement issued by the French, killed 254 people and wounded 652.

The Royal Air Force, having achieved its remarkable success at Dunkirk, now turned again to its attempt to hold up the German advance into France. Armoured vehicles and supply columns were attacked at every possible opportunity. But the Allied armies were in retreat, so that the Royal Air Force aerodromes in France were never secure and the squadrons were forced to make frequent moves.

It was on June 10 that Italy's declaration of war on Great Britain and France accentuated still further the troubles under which the Allied forces in France

were labouring. On this day, too, the Admiralty announced the loss of the aircraft carrier "Glorious" off the coast of Norway. The R.A.F. exerted all its strength in hampering the enemy and damaging his sources of supply. But the German technique of advance still worked: the preparation by bombing aeroplanes, the follow-up by armoured divisions, and the consolidation with infantry.

Paris was declared an open town and the retreat from the capital began. The Germans entered through the Auber-villiers Gate. Operations in other theatres of war continued, and the battleship "Scharnhorst" was bombed by the Fleet Air Arm near Trondheim Fjord. Malta was bombed by the Italians; Assab was bombed by the British. The South African Air Force raided Kismayu, an Italian aerodrome on the southern tip of Italian Somaliland. Russia moved in the east and occupied five principal towns in Lithuania, but in these parts there was no air action.

On June 16 the resignation of the Reynaud government was announced, and the formation of a new government with Marshal Pétain as Prime Minister and M. Pugeot as Air Minister. The French air force continued up to this time to fight with determination, but in the evening Marshal Pétain announced that the French Army had been ordered to stop fighting.

In these closing stages of the battle of France the Royal Air Force had to concern itself with returning to Britain

with as much of its equipment as possible, in readiness for the attack on England loudly proclaimed by the German propaganda service as the next move.

Actually the Royal Air Force managed to get away with most of its equipment and to leave nothing behind of value to the enemy. But these withdrawal operations inevitably restricted its offensive action for a few days. It was fully ready, however, to tackle any attempts to raid Great Britain.

Such attempts in somewhat larger force than before were made on June



NEW ZEALAND 'ACE'

Flying Officer Edgar Kain, a New Zealander, familiarly known as 'Cobber' Kain (above, right), was one of the first air 'aces' of the Second Great War. After winning the D.F.C., he was unfortunately killed in an accident.

Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright

19 and June 20. On June 19 in particular a notable achievement was the shooting down by British fighters of seven night raiders. The night was bright and moonlit, and this helped the fighters in their task. But it was the most successful night interception that had occurred up to that time.

At this period another feat of the Royal Air Force deserves special note—the raiding of objectives in Italy. While there were French bases available for these operations they did not differ from other night bombing work; but when the collapse of France took away these bases, the raiding of objectives in Italy entailed very long flights. On June 22 France signed the armis-

tice with Germany. On this day Britain signified her intention of prosecuting the war alone with as great vigour as before by another attack by the Fleet Air Arm on the "Scharnhorst" and by the sinking of a 6,000-ton German supply ship in the North Sea by the Coastal Command. German aircraft factories at many places were also bombed.

During the period from the invasion of the Low Countries to the collapse of France further evidence was given of the value of air preparation in all troop movements. This had been shown by the Norwegian campaign, but it was further emphasized by the German advance through France.

So fierce was the air assault that the defending troops could not stand up to the subsequent advance of the armoured divisions. It was only when the air defence showed an equal vigour and when the air counter-attack was maintained on the largest scale, as at Dunkirk, that the enemy's activities could in any way be checked.

It is also to be noted that the technical quality of the aircraft did not seem, during the advance into France, to be of such importance as before. The German dive-bombers of the Junkers 87 type were not of advanced design, but they served their purpose in the air preparation. Other of the German aircraft were of much higher technical quality, and the Junkers 88 bomber showed that it had a good turn of speed. It could be used for dive-bombing, though it was not a specialized machine for this purpose.

The Heinkel 111 was also used extensively and was the machine chosen for most of the raids on Britain and on France. Dornier 17 aeroplanes and Dornier 215s were used a great deal for reconnaissance work. They also had a fairly good performance for the load carried. But during this time no German bombers put in an appearance which were armed so heavily as the British bombers or had any form of equipment which could be compared with the hydraulically operated turrets.

Probably the most successful of the German aeroplanes was the relatively new Messerschmitt 110, a twin-engined fighter carrying cannon and machine-guns and having a high top speed and good climb. It was subsequently used also as a high-performance bomber, being modified to carry a small load of bombs without any appreciable reduction in performance. (Six types of German aircraft are illustrated in page 942.)

German Aircraft Types



PARIS THE VICTIM OF NAZI RAIDERS

A mass German air raid was made upon Paris on June 3, 1940. Over a thousand bombs were dropped and considerable damage was caused. This photograph shows a block of flats in a residential quarter of the city after a bomb had struck the side of it.

Photo, Associated Press

The British aeroplanes during this period reaffirmed their technical superiority in performance and in fire power. The eight-gun Spitfire and Hurricane fighters proved their worth especially at Dunkirk. Here also the behaviour of the Boulton Paul Defiant supported the theory of the turret fighter. Instead of attacking when the aircraft is pointed at the enemy, in the manner of the ordinary multi-gun single-seat fighter, the turret fighter attacks by gaining a position from which the gunner in the four-gun turret immediately behind the pilot's cockpit can bring effective fire to bear.

Minor changes in the military equipment of the enemy during this period included the more extensive use of fire-resisting fuel tanks. These tanks were

composed of successive layers of different materials and they greatly reduced the risks of fire when struck by machine-gun bullets.

Armour also came into use to an increasing extent. Some of the German bombers shot down were found to be fairly heavily armoured. There was a gradual adjustment of the aircraft of both sides to meet the conditions of the war as they were seen to develop. But as a whole the British technical lead was affirmed.

Two sharply divided methods may be distinguished in the tactics employed: the first during the attack on the Low Countries, the second during the advance across France. The sandwich method, already described, was used for the attack on the Low Countries

and represented a novel application of air power. In the advance across France perfectly orthodox methods were used throughout, although perhaps an unexpectedly strong emphasis was placed on dive-bombing as air preparation for the advance of ground troops.

Aerial fighting went on where it left off in the war of 1914-18: that is to say, there were dog-fights, and when large formations clashed the aircraft usually split up so that eventually a series of individual combats occurred. This was in contradiction to the predictions of many experts, who had said that, owing to the high speeds of modern aircraft, dog-fighting would no longer be possible.

The theory of General Douhet was not seen in practice to any great extent. This theory postulates the use of aircraft in mass to attack large centres of population with the object of breaking down at the source the will to war. The German attack on Rotterdam may be said to have been derived from the Douhet theory, but it was only part of a much bigger operation. It did show, however, what extensive areas can be devastated in a city when they are attacked by modern bombers working in large formations and when there is no strong defence.

Douhet's Theory of Attack

There is one other point to be noted about the German air operations up to the fall of France; it is the ineffectiveness of their night work. A great many night raids were made on Britain, apparently with the object of attacking military targets; but in the vast majority of cases the airmen seemed to be unable to find their objectives. It was suggested that this was the result of inadequate training in night flying, but, in fact, German commercial pilots of the pre-war period were known to be as good at night flying as the pilots of other countries.

More probable was the view that the targets were not discovered by night because they were well camouflaged, and because Britain is an extremely difficult country for the airman to find his way about. Its narrow, twisting roads, hedges and lanes, and its irregular fields make it a puzzle country for the airman. The consequence was that targets which were well camouflaged were probably not found. It was clear that if larger and more readily distinguished targets were selected the Germans would easily be able to find them by night.

British night flying Service pilots, however, were probably rather better trained, and there was certainly a greater number of trained and experienced night flying pilots in the R.A.F.

THE BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE IN THE BATTLE OF THE RIVERS

The Highland Division Sent to the Left Flank—Story of Newcomb's Rifles—Withdrawal Across the Seine—On the Bresle Line—Heroic Rearguard Action of the 'Amps'—Tank Onslaughts—Retreat of the 51st Division: Enemy Blocks the Way to the Port—At Veules-les-Roses and St. Valery

(A fuller account of the 51st (Highland) Division is given in Chapter 149)

WHEN the great offensive opened on May 10 the bulk of the British Expeditionary Force was rushed to Belgium in response to King Leopold's urgent appeal for aid. Within a few days, however, the position it had taken up in front of Louvain was made untenable by reason of the French collapse on the Meuse, and the British divisions, heavily engaged with the enemy, began that retreat which ended on the beaches of Dunkirk. There was, however, a considerable number of British troops who were not entrapped in the gradually closing pocket about Ypres and Lille. In particular there was the 51st (Highland) Division, which, when the battle began, was holding a portion of the French line in front of the Maginot forts in the Metz region, and scattered here and there in what had been the zone of British command during the months of inaction, i.e. from September to May, a number of units of very varied description and size.

As the position deteriorated the French High Command withdrew the Highland Division from the line at Metz and sent it to re-

inforce the Allies' left flank, and at the same time the scattered bat-

talions—very "scratch" some of them—were hastily formed into brigades or even divisions. To one of these—it became known as Vickforce—was given the task of holding up the enemy advance in a sector between the Somme and the Seine.

It was May 19, the day on which General Weygand took over from Gamelin, and the position chosen was along the Béthune, a little river which enters the Channel at Dieppe, and a wooded ridge on its south-western bank; on this line Vickforce dug itself in.

For ten days the men mined bridges, erected wire obstacles, built road blocks, concealed anti-tank rifles and Bren guns in strong emplacements; and in a brave attempt to bluff the enemy into the belief that they were stronger far than they were, set up in dummy emplacements spoof soldiers made of sandbags, wearing steel helmets and armed with

tent poles. So day and night they laboured, and as they laboured there poured over and through them without intermission columns of refugees and troops and military transport escaping from the Germans who had smashed the French line at Abbeville and Amiens. After ten days the little force was reorganized as the Beauman Division, under Major-General A. B. Beauman, and it then had three battalions of about 700 men each. One of the three was known as "Newcomb's Rifles" and commanded by Lieut.-Col. L. E. C. Perowne, of the Royal Engineers.

From May 19 until June 8 this gallant collection of British oddments stood somewhat aloof from the confused battle on the Somme, although they were subjected to air bombing every day.

Time and again German armoured vehicles and motorized infantry approached, but always they withdrew without an attack. At length, however, the battle drew very near, and it became apparent that the Béthune line, in one section of which 300 rifles were now strung out along 12 miles of front—about one man to 70 yards—could not be held much longer unless it were strongly reinforced.

By June 7 the situation could hardly be graver, and a scheme of withdrawal in small parties moving independently through the broken wooded country to the ferries over the Seine west of Rouen was worked out in careful detail. The scheme was given the code name "Robin Hood," and late in the afternoon of the next day the order went out to the



THE CANADIANS WERE DISAPPOINTED

When the situation in France grew desperate a large force of Canadians was sent there in the early days of June, 1940. They arrived within 30 miles of Paris when they were ordered to retire, and returned to England disgusted at not having encountered the enemy. Above, Canadians at a West Coast port on their way to France.

Photo, P.N.A.



BRITISH HIDE-OUT IN NORMAN FIELDS

Many British troops were placed in jeopardy in Normandy when their communications were cut during the German thrust in June, 1940. Owing to fog off the coast evacuation was only partially successful and numbers were captured. Above, British soldiers hiding in a roadside ditch in Normandy to escape observation by Nazi aircraft.

Photo, British Official : Crown Copyright

companies: "Robin Hood; blow all bridges and craters before leaving. Take particular care against air observation. No especial hurry." So the 2,000-odd British soldiers began to thread their disciplined way through forest paths and a countryside cluttered with the debris of armies in retreat and a populace in flight.

In what follows we tell only of Newcomb's Rifles, but the other two battalions had the same task and performed it not less competently. Towards the evening of June 9 detachments of the Newcomb's were nearing the Seine. The Germans were in Rouen and were sending out to the north mobile columns of tanks and truck-borne infantry to cut off the retreat; the small river towns of Caudebec and Duclair were choked with wreckage, human and material; Duclair, moreover, had been bombed and was in flames, and dense smoke from burning oil tanks drifted low across the woods. In the dusk the battalion's commander set out in his car to "C" Company, who were nearest Rouen, and carried their headquarters staff in several

journeys to Fontaine. On his last journey he ran into a concertina wire in the dark—wire put up around a number of German tanks parked for the night! At once he drew heavy fire and the car was wrecked, though fortunately there were no casualties. Colonel Perowne and his Intelligence Officer, covering the escape of their party, were pursued with bursts of rifle fire, but managed to slip away through the trees. At Fontaine they found the French ferry boats tied up on the south bank, and as their crews remained deaf to every call the headquarters staff spent the night in a lair amongst the rocks.

Meanwhile, battalion rear headquarters, who had taken refuge for the night in a barn, were surprised by four enemy tanks which drove along the road from Rouen at dawn, spraying woods and hedges at random with machine-gun fire. Watching through cracks in the barn door, the little party of British soldiers saw the first tank turn in at the farm gate. Without losing a moment one man crawled out of the barn unnoticed and opened a second gate.

Then at his signal the rest flung open the barn door and dashed out in their small car and on two motor-cycles. Picking up their comrade, they got clear away, despite the wild volleys of the enemy.

At the same time the headquarters company was threading its way by compass through the forest of Trail, avoiding all the roads and paths which by this time were held by the enemy. For more than six hours the company commander followed an accurate course in the thick of the smoke-filled forest, and emerged through the trees within a few hundred yards of the ferry which was his objective.

Early on June 10 the ferries resumed operation, although the approaches to them were jammed with refugees and military transport. At 6 o'clock Caudebec was bombed and fires were started, and air attacks were continuous all day. In the midst of the work of crossing the ferry captain refused to return from the far bank, and as he ignored the furious ringing of the bell, volunteers swam the river and placed him under armed guard. At long last the crossing was completed, the refugees and French troops being sent across first, and then, when the



BRITISH BOMBER FINDS THE TARGET

The R.A.F. played an all-important part in enabling the withdrawal of the B.E.F. from Dunkirk to be carried out successfully. In addition to engaging in combat the hordes of enemy aircraft which sought to sink our ships they destroyed everything in the vicinity which might help the German war machine. Here a cloud of dense smoke is rising from a burning oil tank destroyed by the R.A.F. at Dunkirk.

Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright



FRENCH ON THE WEYGAND LINE

After the Germans swept through the Low Countries the French established a line on the Somme-Aisne front. Above, a French machine-gun emplacement on the Weygand Defence Line. Below, French infantrymen guarding a strategic point on a railway line in this sector.

Photos, Associated Press



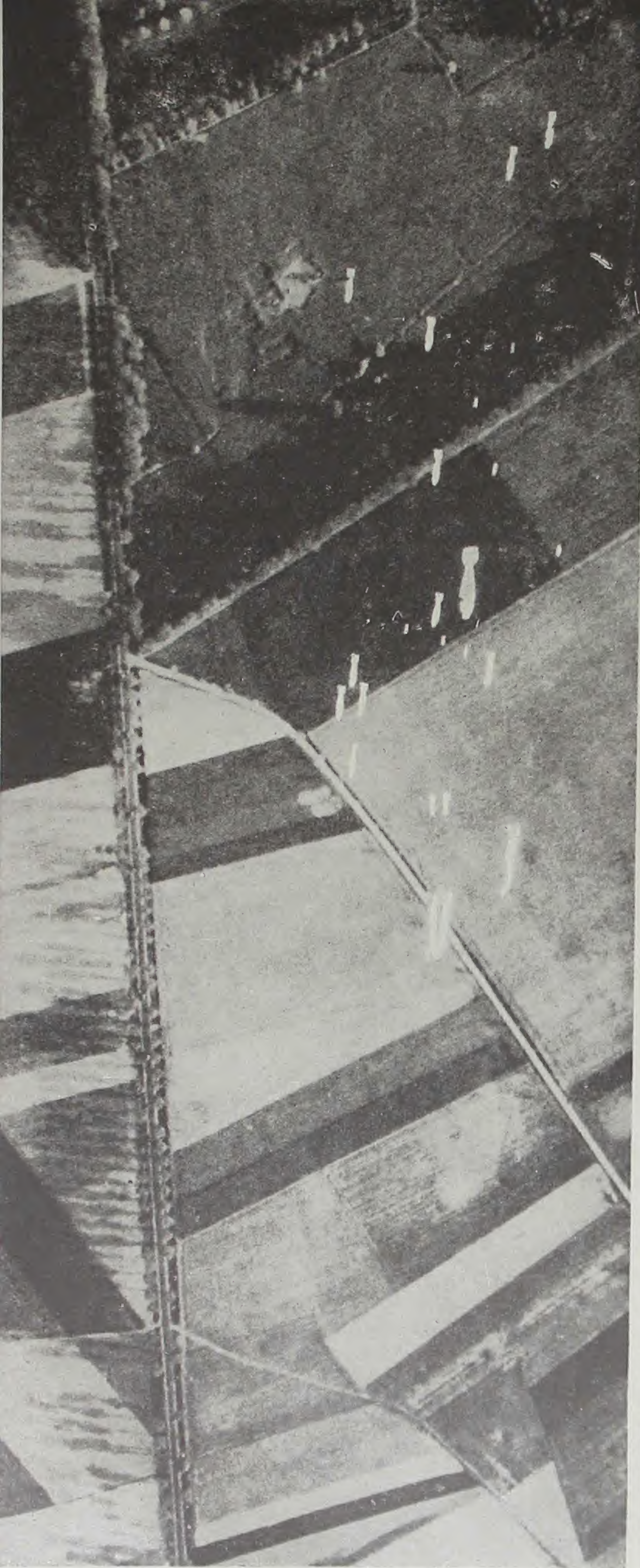


TANKS IN AND OUT OF ACTION

In the photograph above a British cruiser tank is advancing up a country lane in France in the vicinity of the battle front. Below, the crew of a British tank which broke down near the level crossing of a small French town are busily engaged in essential repairs. As indicated by the direction plate, this town is about 46 miles (74 km.) from Rouen.

Photos, British Official : Crown Copyright

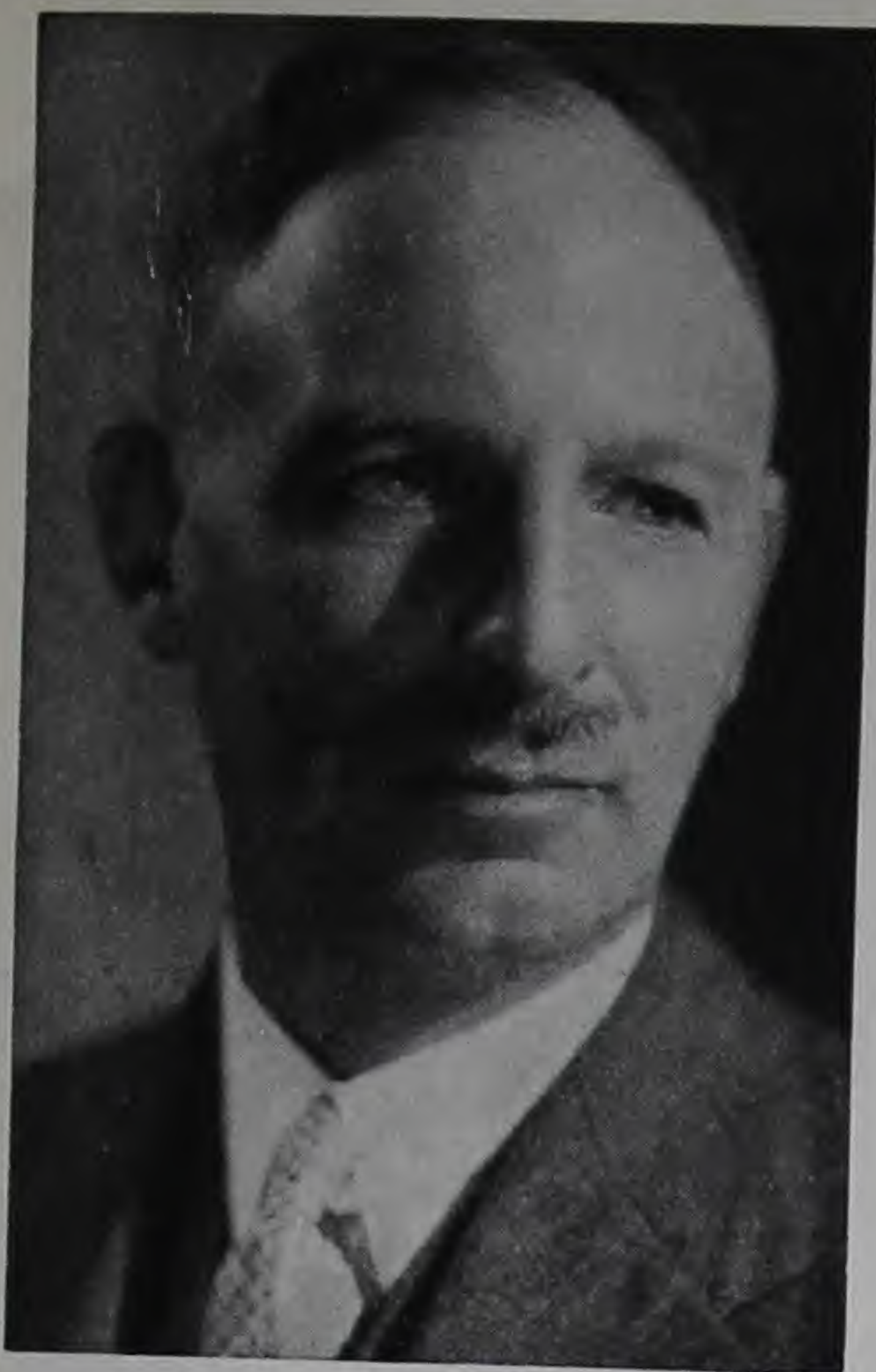




BRITISH BOMBERS STRADDLE GERMAN COLUMNS IN FRANCE

Here is photographic evidence of the work carried out by the R.A.F. in harassing the enemy during the Battle of France. Left, a salvo of twenty-five bombs is seen falling upon an enemy transport column going northwards along the straight road from Ruisseauville. Right, bombs bursting amid an enemy transport column moving through a French town, while other bombs are still falling.

Photos, British Official : Crown Copyright



O.C. 'BEAUMAN'S DIVISION'

Above is Maj.-Gen. A. B. Beaman, who led the composite British force on the Somme which became known as the Beaman Division. Its deeds are related in this chapter.

Photo, Bassano

approaches to the ferry had been cleared, the British troops and their transport brought up the rear. In this way four-fifths of Newcomb's Rifles crossed the Seine with all their arms and baggage, and nine days later, after further fighting and many an adventure, they succeeded in getting safely away from Cherbourg to England.

While Vickforce was engaged in this little war of its own, cut off from its comrades and removed from the main battle, the 51st Division and the other troops that went to

On the Bresle Line make up the "little B.E.F." were engaged in heavy fighting not

far away. On May 27 the Highlanders were holding the line of the little river Bresle, from which they were sent forward to the Abbeville area to defend the Somme bridgeheads in conjunction with units of the French Ninth Corps. Very heavy fighting developed from June 1 onwards, and combined attacks by the French, assisted by the 152nd and 153rd Brigades, at dawn on June 4 failed to secure the bridgehead. The division suffered heavy casualties, especially the 152nd Brigade (Seaforths and Camerons).

A particularly brilliant incident of this day's fighting was the highly successful attack by the Gordons against enemy forces strongly entrenched in the Grand Bois; the position was carried after

the most gallant fighting, and the whole wood was cleared of the enemy.

Heavy enemy pressure, however, finally made a withdrawal inevitable, and the division fell back again to the line of the Bresle, where at one time it occupied a front more than 18 miles long. These positions were held for only three days; then on the night of June 8 a further withdrawal was carried out to the line of the Béthune. Next morning (June 9) the 154th Brigade was detached and ordered to defend the Havre area, to take up a line running due south from Fécamp, in the hope that it could hold it until the other two brigades could join it.

Before we trace the final fortunes of the 51st Division, however, we may recall one or two of the innumerable and, for the most part, unrecorded acts of heroism and endurance performed by British detachments, involved in the confusion of a battle which was also an almost continuous retreat. There was, for instance, the rearguard action of a small company of the "Amps"—battalions of middle-aged pioneers.

"These men," wrote "Eye-Witness," "were old soldiers specially picked to drop their spade and shovel and take up a rifle to delay the German advance towards a bridge. They were rushed up to the top of a wooded hill where German tanks, followed by infantry, were advancing. Tanks suddenly appeared, and heavy fire was opened on them by the 'Amps.' One after another three tanks were hit and put out of action. After holding back the German advance the 'Amps' withdrew towards the river. When they reached it they found that the bridge which they had been protecting had been blown up. Their retreat was cut off. The middle-aged officer in charge of the party at once decided to swim across the wide, swiftly flowing river to obtain a boat from the other side. He would not allow any of his men to take the risk. 'It was a fine action for a man by no means young,' a fellow-officer told me. 'He stripped off his uniform and plunged into the river. His men, hiding from German tanks in bushes by the bank, watched him grow smaller and smaller as he slowly crossed the river. At last they saw a tiny figure clamber up the other bank. Shortly afterwards the officer came back rowing a large boat, and all the men were then taken safely across.'"

The evacuation of the military hospitals from the area threatened by the German advance also called not only for first-class organization, but for courage of a high order. The evacua-

tion of one British military hospital was described as a miracle of calmness and efficiency. As the danger drew near all the wounded were carefully driven away in ambulances to a hospital train, which soon took them far from the danger zone. Then all the equipment was carefully packed and stowed in lorries and ambulances. Just before the little party drove off, men were treated who had been wounded by shells falling less than a mile away. When the retreating detachments reached the Seine, officers and men loaded a number of boats down to the water's edge with wounded and paddled them across the river from the north to the south bank under heavy fire with nothing but a piece of wood to use as a paddle. Then the wounded were carried ashore while shells shrieked overhead from the German batteries, which had taken up their positions on the north bank.

Throughout, the retreat from the Somme to the Seine was conducted in circumstances of extraordinary difficulty. There was no front worthy of the **A Tank Onslaught** name; no one knew where the Germans were massing, when or where the next attack would come; danger lurked on every hand, and in particular the roaring, rumbling tanks seemed to be everywhere. Here is the story of



O.C. 'NEWCOMB'S RIFLES'

Lt.-Col. Perowne commanded one of the three battalions of the Beaman Division known as 'Newcomb's Rifles.' The battalion did magnificent work during the withdrawal through Normandy.

Photo, Lafayette



NAZI VANGUARD IN ROUEN

By June 9, 1940, the enemy, advancing from Forges-les-Eaux, had reached the Seine, and detachments of German troops were already in Rouen. Nazi soldiers are here seen in conversation with French civilians among the ruins of the famous city.

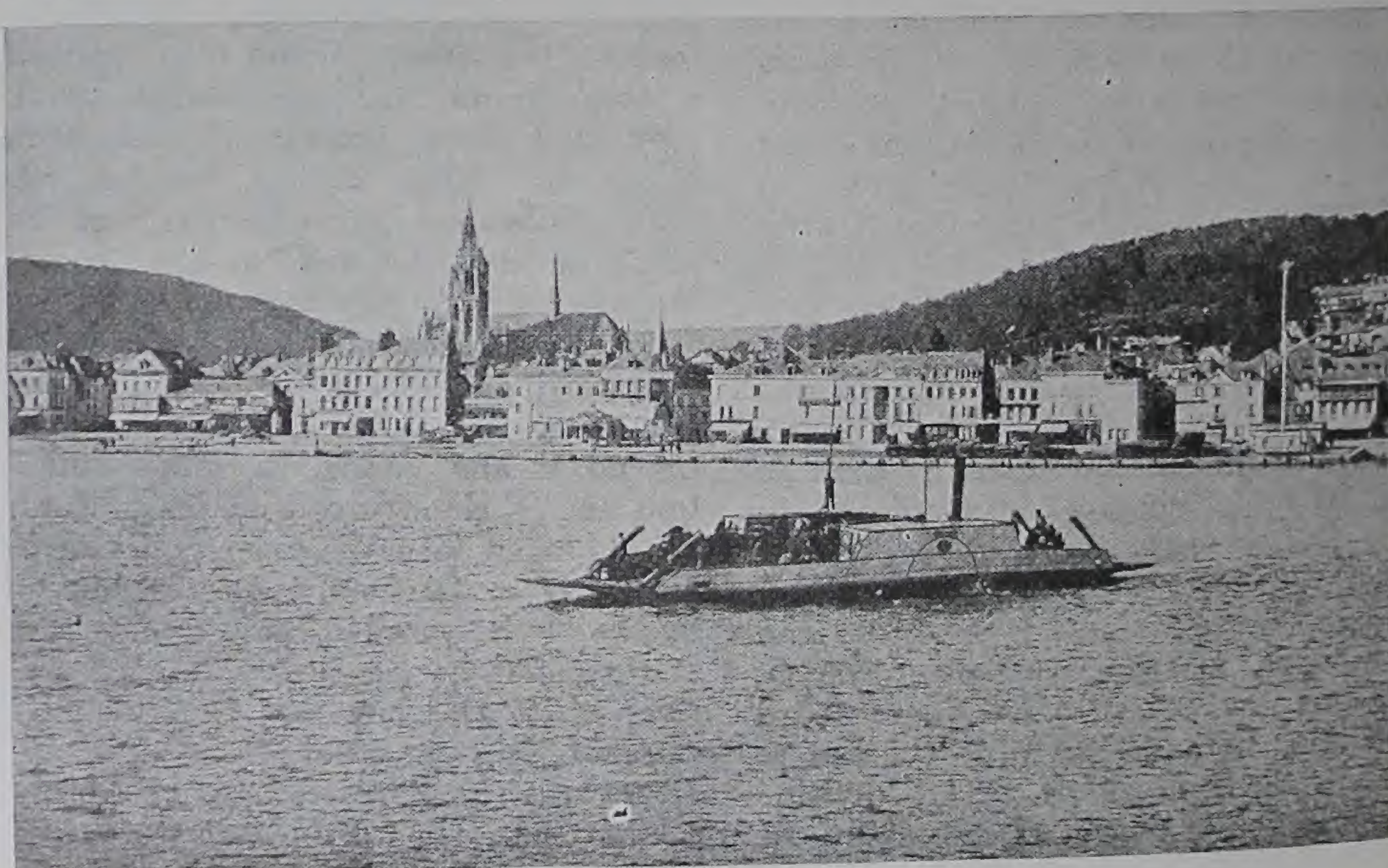
Photo, E.N.A.

one of the many tank onslaughts. It was told to "Eye-Witness" by a young second lieutenant.

"My platoon," he said, "with several others, was ordered to hold up the German advance towards an important bridge. During the night we dug ourselves in near a road leading down a hillside to the bridge. With us were three French anti-tank guns, carefully concealed, in charge of a French lieutenant. About 3 a.m., when there was just the faintest grey in the sky, a light German tank came down the road. An anti-tank gun opened fire and it swerved round and rushed up the hill. Not long after we heard the dull rumble of a column of traffic coming down the hill on a small by-road partly hidden by trees. Suddenly three tanks rolled into view out of the trees, followed by a stream of vehicles. We could not tell in the dim light whether they were French or German. We held our fire. Then the three leading tanks, a light reconnaissance tank and two medium tanks, about 35 tons, came well into

view broadside on from our positions only a short distance away. The turrets of the tanks were open, and standing in them were men with German steel helmets. Unfortunately, only one of the anti-tank guns was mounted in a position to cover this by-road. The French lieutenant opened fire and knocked out two medium tanks. These blocked the road for the long column of vehicles, at least 50 in number, coming down the road closely packed. Every single man in the column jumped out of his vehicle and dashed up the hill. One of the Germans who jumped out of the leading medium tank was shot dead by one of our men before he got to the ground. We opened fire on the crowd of men running up the hill and caused many casualties.

"The men seemed rather demoralized by the unexpected attack from our hidden positions. They apparently took with them all the weapons they could. Tank Crews As soon as they got at Bay on top of the hill they began to open fire, at first with rifles and machine-guns firing tracer bullets, then with anti-tank guns, and later with what seemed to be a light field gun. We replied with rifle fire. Though the Germans' fire was heavy, it was very inaccurate. They seemed to be a little too far back over the crest of the hill, and their fire mostly came above us. After about half an hour it was so intense that we sent back for reinforcements, as there were only about 15 to 20 men in our position all told. Our messenger could not get through



WHERE ALLIES CROSSED THE SEINE

This panoramic view of Caudebec-en-Caux (on the Seine, 27 miles N.W. of Rouen) is taken from the left bank of the river. On ferries similar to that in the photograph many British and French troops crossed the river before the Germans could cut them off. In some cases individual officers and men swam across the wide and swiftly flowing river under fire to fetch a boat

Photo, E.N.A.

because the fire was so heavy, so we had to carry on. After about 2½ hours the fire from the Germans was so concentrated that it was decided to withdraw. We went down the hill to a group of houses, where we found a motor-car. With a number of men I started off in this towards the river. We came under heavy fire. One tire was hit, and then the firing became so hot that we jumped out and crept along in a ditch which gave us a little cover. We had several casualties, and I fear one man who is missing may have been killed. Our cover was so slight that bullets went only about eight inches above our heads, and it took us three-quarters of an hour to cover a hundred yards."

Afterwards a colonel of the unit told "Eye-Witness" this same young officer decided to swim across the river and fetch a boat, in spite of the fact that the river had been under heavy fire,

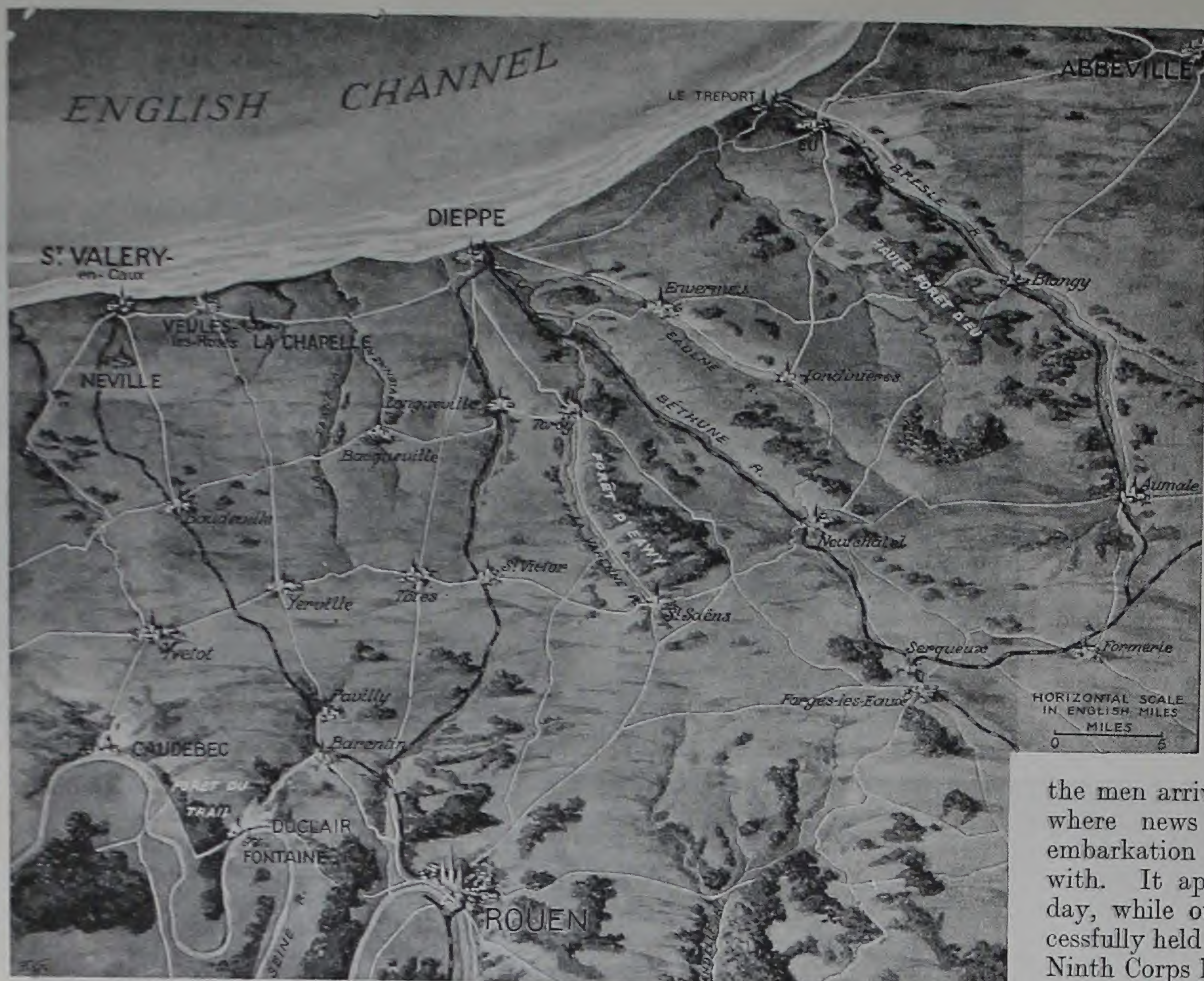


SOME OF THE IMMORTAL FIFTY-FIRST

The Highlanders of the 51st Division gave an excellent account of themselves when they defended the Somme bridge-heads during the Battle of France. Men of this famous division are pictured in this page. Above, Gordon Highlanders cleaning Bren carriers in a French farmyard. Left, mails arriving at a Battalion H.Q. of the Seaforth Highlanders. Below, the C.O. of the Camerons inspects the guard while on his rounds.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright





HERE WAS FOUGHT THE BATTLE OF THE RIVERS

From mid-May to mid-June troops of the 'little B.E.F.' strove valiantly to uphold the left flank of the wavering French line. Overborne by vastly superior numbers, they retreated slowly to the coast, fighting back all the way. Among the men engaged were the famous 51st Highland Division and Beauman's Division, a mixed unit whose exploits rivalled those of Carey's Force in March, 1918.

Drawn for THE SECOND GREAT WAR by Félix Gardon

and a fellow officer who had started to swim across with his men had disappeared. The lieutenant found a boat, towed it with one hand across the swiftly flowing river, and took it back packed with wounded.

To return to the 51st Division. On June 9 one of its brigades, the 154th, was detached and ordered to take up a line running due south from Fécamp,

Highlanders Around St. Valery

with a view to defending the Havre area. Eventually this brigade was evacuated to England. On the evening of the following day, June 10, the remaining two brigades, the 152nd and 153rd, moved back along the coast-line via Dieppe, to take up their final positions round St. Valery-en-Caux. A bridgehead was formed around St. Valery, the southern portion being held by units of the French Ninth Corps, the eastern face by the 153rd Brigade, and the western area by the 152nd Brigade. The following day the enemy appeared in force and launched heavy attacks with large numbers of tanks, assisted by very accurate mortar fire and the

cooperation of masses of aircraft, against which, apart from ground fire, we had little protection.

Heavy casualties were suffered by the 153rd Brigade (Gordon Highlanders and Black Watch). The men, however, held on gallantly throughout the day and the enemy failed to break through at any point on the eastern wing. Increasing fire, however, especially from heavy mortars, guided by accurate direction from the air, made the line ever more difficult to hold. At night the order was received to withdraw to the beaches and for the troops to embark at St. Valery, where vessels were to be sent to receive them. A rendezvous was given at St. Valery railway station, and embarkation was to begin at 2 a.m. on June 12.

Gen. Fortune's final order to his division, dated St. Valery, June 11, was to the effect that the Navy would probably make an effort to take the division off by boat, perhaps that night, or in two nights. All ranks must realize that the operation could be achieved only by the full cooperation of everyone, and that the utmost discipline

must prevail. Men would board boats with equipment and arms; vehicles would be rendered useless. Finally, if the enemy should attack before the whole force was evacuated, all ranks must realize that it would be up to them to defeat them. The enemy might attack with tanks, but we had anti-tank guns. If the infantry could stop the enemy's infantry, that was all that was required, while our anti-tank guns and rifles could inflict casualties on the enemy's armoured fighting vehicles.

The withdrawal was successfully made and

the men arrived near their rendezvous, where news was received that the embarkation could not be proceeded with. It appeared that the previous day, while our two brigades had successfully held their positions, the French Ninth Corps had been forced back, permitting the enemy to get round behind the British positions and occupy the port. Harbour and beaches were already occupied by the enemy.

At 8 a.m. the French capitulated and handed over the town to the Germans. There was therefore no further hope of escape, and the remnant of the division, totalling about 150 to 200 officers and between 4,000 and 5,000 men, was taken prisoner by the enemy, together with the French Ninth Corps.

One of the unhappiest aspects of this tragic event was the fact that at Veules-les-Roses, a little port a few miles eastward of St. Valery, a large number of other British troops were at that moment being embarked.

Some belonged to an R.A.S.C. Petrol Company, and after days of hard driving under heavy shell-fire had reached La Chapelle, 7-8 miles east of St. Valery, on June 10. Orders were given to destroy all vehicles not needed for transport of their own personnel, and to move on to the village of Neville, ten miles south of St. Valery. As the column drove out at midnight, an enemy barrage was creeping up to within a hundred yards of the parking place.

After three hours of snail-like progress over bad roads in pitch darkness they reached Neville early on June 11 and began to organize the village to resist the enemy. But in the afternoon the car park was located by enemy

aircraft, shelled, and set on fire; eleven vehicles were destroyed. All the men escaped injury, however, and the unit was ordered to make its way to the beach at St. Valery—there to await the C.O., who, on a push-cycle, had gone to report at divisional headquarters. H.Q. had moved, and so the officer returned to Neville, destroyed all petrol supplies there, and made for St. Valery.

At the outskirts of the town he was stopped by heavy shelling, and so turned eastwards in the direction of Veules, hoping that he would come across his men later. On the way he had collected a number of stragglers. At Veules they found themselves on the cliff top, 150 feet or more above the beaches.

An attempt was made to get through a wood that ran down to the beach, but the enemy was there in force, and a dozen of our men were picked off. There was nothing for it but to return to the cliff top, where the party was joined by part of the missing Petrol Company.

It was now well after midnight, and something had to be done quickly if they were not all to be taken like rats in a trap at the coming of daylight. A signaller N.C.O. dashed a message in Morse to ships waiting in the Channel off

THE FIGHTING RETREAT

On the right, men of a Highland regiment are holding a concealed machine-gun post on the edge of a wood. As in the war of 1914-1918, the famous 51st (Highland) Division won further laurels. Below, pioneers of the A.M.P.C., which played a gallant part in delaying the Nazi advance, are seen unloading ammunition at a dump in France.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright





ALL WERE IN THE THICK OF IT

R.A.M.C., R.A.S.C. and the Royal Corps of Signals all played a notable part in the Battle of France. Above, Signallers working throughout the night to preserve communications ; left, R.A.M.C. unloading wounded from an ambulance in France ; below, men of the R.A.S.C., with an anti-tank rifle, ward off attacks and keep the supply lines open.

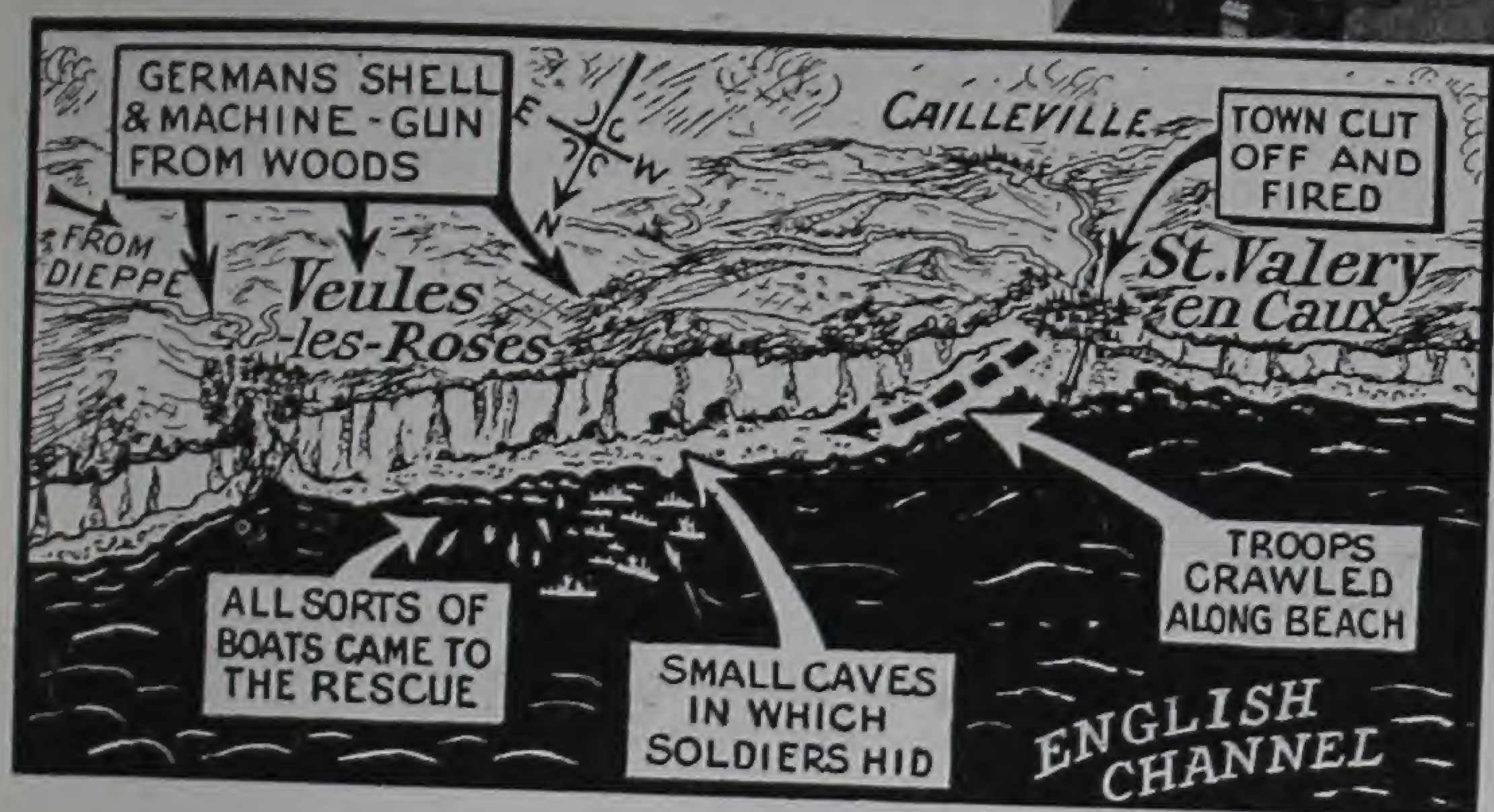
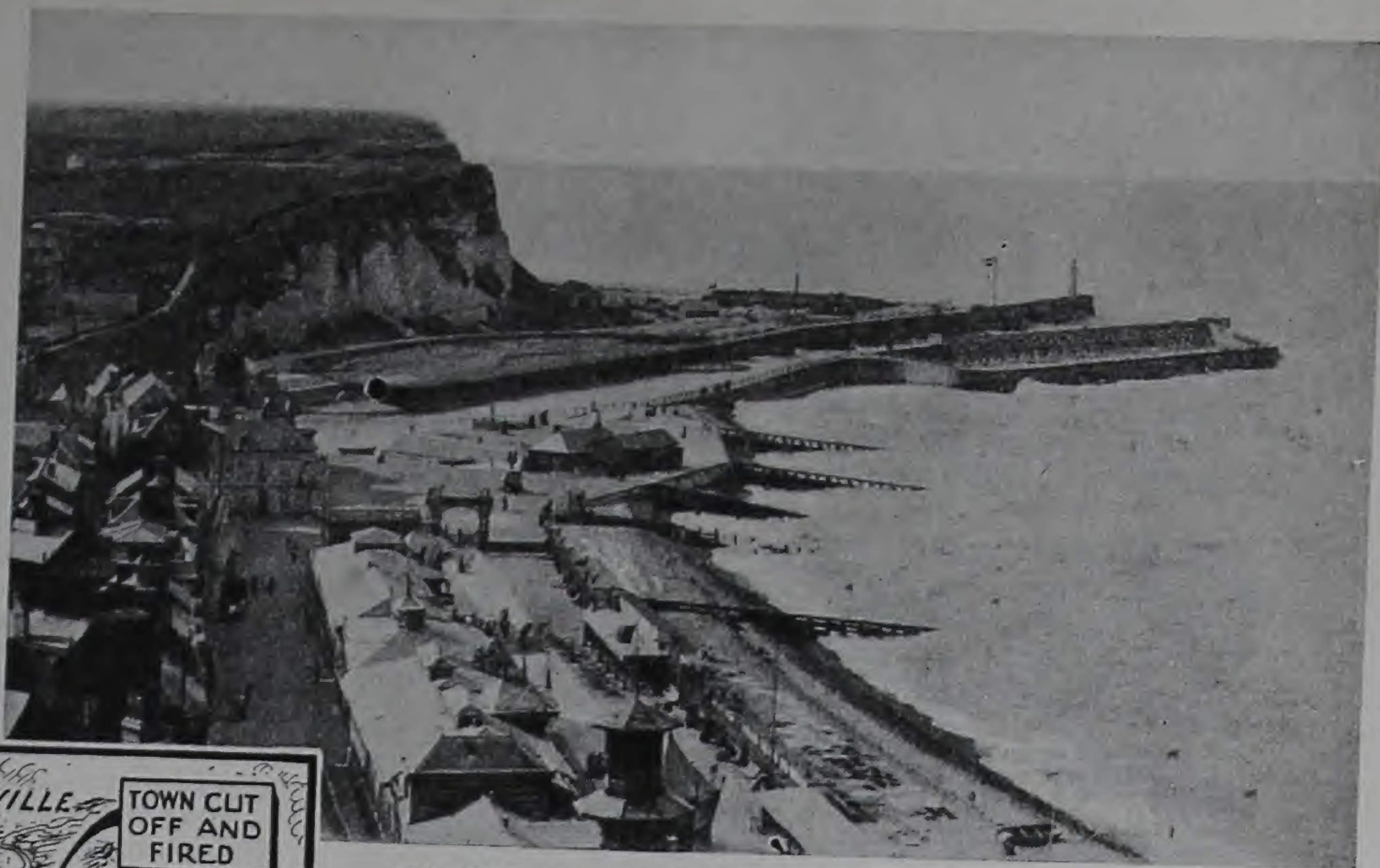
Photos, British Official : Crown Copyright



St. Valery, warning the boats to stand by, while others of the party sought frantically for ropes or other means of descending the steep cliffs.

Pulling up a wire fence, men unwound it and lowered this makeshift "rope" over the cliff edge. They tried to climb down on it, but it broke and several men fell headlong.

There was a windlass standing on the edge of the cliff, and the men found a wire hawser, which they attached. Some tried to descend this way, but the hawser was greasy and their hands slipped, so that more fell to the bottom. Then someone thought of their rifle slings. These were made of very stout webbing,



WHERE MANY OF THE B.E.F. WERE TRAPPED

When the 51st Division became involved in the Allied retreat in June, 1940, two of its brigades (152nd and 153rd) were compelled to surrender at Saint Valery-en-Caux (above) when the French capitulated on June 12 and handed over the town to the Germans. Left, a short stretch of the Normandy coast showing ports of St. Valery and Veules-Roses, linked by a line of caves which provided hiding-places for many men of the B.E.F. pending evacuation by the Navy.

Photo, E.N.A. Map by courtesy of "Daily Telegraph"

and if they could be joined securely might furnish a life-line by which the men could reach the beach below. By reef knots and the use of the stout brass clips at the ends the slings were fashioned into a "rope," and it was tested. It held, and for seven long hours it stood the strain while all the party at the cliff top slid down gingerly.

The day was well advanced before the Commanding Officer—last of them to descend—made his way down to the beach, but mercifully

there was a projecting piece of cliff that seems to have hidden the

entire scene from the Germans near by. Not a shot was fired during the slow and perilous adventure. Below the men found boats that took them off to the waiting transports.

Meanwhile, at St. Valery itself, stirring events were happening. Up to noon on June 11 things had been pretty quiet. There were many Allied troops there, including cavalry and infantry regiments and numerous smaller parties who had lost touch with their own formations. A few minutes after mid-day a deafening crash was the prelude to a close and heavy bombardment by the enemy, who had come round the town along the edge of the cliff and were shelling the troops in the valley below.

The account of what followed is from the narrative of a gunner in the

could be got; from pier and promenade men fled down to the beaches. Some made their way up to the town to fight the incoming enemy; a few found boats and rowed out seawards, while others stripped and tried to swim out. Discarding greatcoats, many men made their way over the shingle to places where the towering cliffs gave some shelter; the tide was coming in, but it turned before reaching the refugees.

In the town there was much shelling and machine-gun fire. The enemy sent out two boats filled with soldiers, who rowed along parallel with the shore and machine-gunned those sheltering there. Until dusk, seven hours later, it would not be safe to stir far away, but on hands and knees they made their way over the shingle towards Veules-Roses, a mile and a half away. Here and there the men found caves in the cliffs. Fifty or so—mostly Seaforths—were cooped up in a cave seven feet wide and twenty feet long. They had little food and no water. All the while there was a furious bombardment, bringing down lumps of chalk and rock. At dusk they were joined by French stragglers, and men stood along the foot of the cliffs two and three deep in places.

Tired out with the strain of waiting for ships that did not come, the men dropped off to sleep. There were many false reports, but about 2 a.m. there really were vessels offshore. At 2.30

B.E.F. There was a scramble for what little cover

a.m. a ship's lifeboat came to take off the soldiers to a cargo vessel some 300 yards out. The trip took 25 minutes out and back, and only twenty-five to thirty men could be carried at a time.

A second boat was brought into service, and things went more quickly; later others came to the beach—now running the gauntlet of enemy shell-fire, as the Germans searched for the ships with their artillery. About 5 a.m. aircraft began dive-bombing over the beach, and also machine-gunned the rescuers and waiting troops. But visibility was poor, and the troops fired back with rifles and machine-guns and brought down at least one Nazi.

Dawn disclosed a beach still filled with soldiers waiting for the boats. Many more men had filtered in from Veules during the night. Now the enemy started to shell the beaches. Soon the trees were ablaze, and shells fell around the lifeboats. But under the supervision of the Royal Marines, who laughed and sang and jocularly called out "Cheer up!" "To hell with the Germans!" the task went on methodically until at last all were got away. The gunner of the B.E.F. from whose story this account is compiled tells how, as the last transport steamed away, a Marine turned to him and said reflectively: "Dunkirk? That was a picnic!"

The account of the fighting that concluded on the beaches of St. Valery and Veules-Roses is based on articles by Mr. Douglas Williams in the "Daily Telegraph," which subsequently appeared in book form as "The New Contemptibles" (John Murray).

ITALY DELIVERS HER STAB IN THE BACK

For nine months after the outbreak of war Mussolini watched events, waiting for the moment when he might advantageously strike at Italy's former allies. On June 10, 1940, he struck, and, although this act of perfidy had been foreseen, it was bitterly condemned not only by Great Britain and France, but by President Roosevelt and statesmen the world over.

MUSSOLINI, IN A SPEECH AFTER THE DECLARATION OF WAR, JUNE 10, 1940 :

FIGHTERS of the land, the sea, and the air, Blackshirts of the revolutions and of the legions, men and women of Italy, of the Empire and other kingdom of Albania : Listen !

The hour marked out by destiny is sounding in the sky of our country. This is the hour of irrevocable decisions. The declaration of war has already been handed to the Ambassadors of Britain and France. We are going to war against the plutocratic and reactionary democracies of the West, who have hindered the advance and often threatened the existence even of the Italian people. The events of quite recent history can be summarized in these words : Half-promises, constant threats, blackmail, and finally, as the crown of this ignoble edifice, the League siege of the Fifty-two States.

Our conscience is absolutely tranquil. With you the whole world is witness that the Italy of the Lictor has done what was humanly possible to avoid the hurricane which is overwhelming Europe, but all was in vain.

It would have been enough to revise the treaties, to adapt them to the vital demands of the life of nations, and not to regard them as intangible throughout eternity. It would have been enough not to have persisted in the policy of guarantees, which have shown themselves to have been above all fatal for those who accepted them. It would have been enough not to have rejected the proposal which the Fuehrer made last October, when the Polish campaign came to an end.

But all that belongs to the past. We are today decided to face all the risks and sacrifices of war. A nation is not really great if it does not regard its undertakings as sacred and if it recoils from those supreme trials which decide the course of history.

We are taking up arms, after having solved the problem of our land frontiers, to settle that of our sea frontiers. We want to break off the territorial and military chains which are strangling us in our sea, for a people of 45,000,000 inhabitants is not truly free if it has not free passage over the ocean.

This gigantic struggle is only a phase of the logical development of our revolution. It is the struggle of peoples, poor but rich in workers, against the exploiters, who fiercely hold on to all the wealth and all the gold of the earth. It is the struggle of peoples, of the fruitful and young peoples, against the sterile peoples on the threshold of their decline. It is the struggle between two centuries and two ideas.

No Intention to Involve Other Nations

Now that the die is cast and we have of our own will burned the bridges behind us, I solemnly declare that Italy does not intend to drag other peoples who are her neighbours by sea and by land into the conflict. Let Switzerland, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Egypt, and Greece take note of these words of mine, for it will depend entirely upon them if they are fully confirmed or not.

At a memorable meeting—that at Berlin—I said that, according to the law of Fascist morality, when one has a friend one stands by him to the end. We have done that and we shall do it with Germany, with her people and her victorious armed forces.

On the eve of this event of historic importance we address our thoughts to his Majesty, the King-Emperor. And we salute equally the head of allied Greater Germany.

Proletarian and Fascist Italy is for the third time on her feet, strong, proud, and united as she has never been before. We have only one watchword, which is clear-cut and binds everyone. This word is already in the air and is burning in Italian hearts from the Alps to the Indian Ocean : To conquer.

We shall conquer, to give at last a long period of peace with justice to Italy, to Europe, to the world.

People of Italy, to arms ! Show your tenacity, your courage, your worth.

HITLER, IN A TELEGRAM TO MUSSOLINI, JUNE 10, 1940 :

I AM deeply moved by the world-historic decision announced by you today. The thoughts of the whole German people are at this moment with you and your country. The German Army rejoices that it will now fight at the side of the Italian Army. Last September Britain declared war for no reason on Germany. They refused my offer of a peaceful settlement. Your offer of mediation was met with a hard refusal. The increasing disregard of the vital rights of our two peoples by the wielders of power in Britain and France has now brought us finally together. I assure you, Duce, of our indivisible community in the struggle. In true comradeship I send you my heartiest greetings.

MR. DUFF COOPER, MINISTER OF INFORMATION, IN A BROADCAST, JUNE 10, 1940 :

MUSSOLINI, Dictator of Italy, has declared war upon the Allies, by whose side Italy fought in the last Great War, and who then, by their efforts, saved Italy from destruction. He has timed the blow with characteristic cowardice and treachery. He has waited for more than nine months. He has waited until France has fought desperately against great odds. At last the opportunity to stab an old friend in the back, in the hour of that friend's greatest peril, has proved too strong a temptation for Mussolini to resist. It will be remembered for generations as one of the vilest acts in history.

It is also very tragic that there is so much that we all like and admire in Italy and the Italian people. We can be quite sure that had they had a democratic system of government which allowed the will of the people to prevail, they never would have entered into this war on the side of their hereditary enemy against their hereditary friends. When a whole nation put their fate into the hands of one bad man they become sooner or later both the accomplices and the victims of his crimes. Today the Italian people are the accomplices of Mussolini. The foolish crowd of young Fascists, who were cheering this afternoon in Rome, little knew the fearful fate that awaits them.

Italy has never won a war without assistance, except against the unfortunate Abyssinians, who were armed with spears against tanks, and with bows and arrows against poison gas. In her struggle for independence in the last century she was assisted at every turn both by Great Britain and by France. It was French soldiers, not Italians, who drew the Austrians out of Italy.

Supposing the impossible were to happen and Germany were to be victorious, the fate of Italy would be even worse. While we should allow the defeated Italy to retain her independence, the victorious Germany would certainly reduce her to the position of a vassal State. But Germany is no more likely to win the war with the assistance of Italy than she was without her. On the contrary, it is more than likely that Italy will prove a liability rather than an asset, as, indeed, she proved to her allies in the last war. After the disgraceful flight of the Italian Army at Caporetto the British and French had to dispatch troops in order to put back some courage in the hearts of the Italians.

No, we need have no fear and, indeed, from one point of view the entry of Italy will prove of immediate assistance. The Italian Peninsula has formed the great gap in our blockade of Germany. Through that tunnel supplies of all kinds have been reaching the enemy. From tonight that tunnel is closed and the effectiveness of the blockade will be increased enormously.

WORLD CENSURE OF MUSSOLINI'S TREACHERY

M. REYNAUD, PRIME MINISTER OF FRANCE, IN A BROADCAST, JUNE 10, 1940 :

WE are in the sixth day of the greatest battle in history. The conflagration began on the Somme and has extended to the east as far as the Meuse. For six days and five nights our soldiers, our airmen, and the Royal Air Force have been facing an enemy superior in numbers and in armaments.

In this war, which is no longer a war of continuous fronts but a war of strong points grouped in depth, our armies have been manoeuvring in retreat. They did not abandon any strong point until they had inflicted cruel losses on the enemy. The kilometres gained by the enemy are scarred by destroyed tanks and by 'planes brought down.

In spite of their gain in prestige, it remains to be seen what will be the effect of these losses on the issue of the war. In any case, nothing can weaken our will to fight for our land and our liberty. We are ready for the trial which we have to face. Our heads will not be bowed.

This very moment, when France, wounded but valiant and undaunted, is fighting against the hegemony of Germany, when she is fighting for the independence of all other peoples as well as for her own, has been chosen by Signor Mussolini to declare war on us. How shall we judge this act? France has nothing to say. The world which is looking on will pass judgement.

You know what the attitude of the Italian Government was towards our attempts at a *rapprochement* and to our long patience. You know that repeatedly I have publicly followed the lead of my predecessors and said that between us and Italy there are no problems which could not be solved by friendly negotiations.

The highest moral authorities in the world, the Pope and President Roosevelt, have repeatedly tried, but in vain, to prevent this war, which is opposed to the Christian idea and to human solidarity.

Signor Mussolini decided that blood must flow. What was the pretext for this declaration of war? When at 4.30 this afternoon our Ambassador, M. François-Poncet, asked this question of Count Ciano, the latter replied that Signor Mussolini was only carrying out the engagements undertaken by him with Hitler. The same declaration of war was addressed to Britain.

Hostilities will begin tonight at midnight. Force will now speak. In the Mediterranean, even more than anywhere else, the Allies are strong.

France enters this war with a clear conscience. For her this is not a mere word. The world will perhaps soon know that moral forces are also forces. In the course of her long and glorious history France has passed through more severe trials and always astonished the world. France cannot die.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT, IN AN ADDRESS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA, CHARLOTTESVILLE, JUNE 10, 1940 :

THE people and Government of the United States have seen with the utmost regret and grave disquiet the decision of the Italian Government to engage in hostilities. More than three months ago Mussolini informed me that, because of Italy's determination to limit the spread of the European conflict as far as might be possible, more than 200,000,000 people in the Mediterranean had been enabled to escape the suffering and devastation of war.

I replied that Italy's desire to prevent the war spreading met with full sympathy on the part of the people and Government of the United States, and I expressed the earnest hope that this policy on Italy's part might be continued. I made it clear that in the opinion of the United States any extension of hostilities in the region of the Mediterranean might result in a still greater enlargement of the scene of conflict in the Near East and Africa, and that if this occurred nobody could foretell how much greater the extension of the war might eventually become.

Subsequently, recognizing that certain Italian aspirations might form a basis for discussions among Powers specifically concerned, I offered to send to the British and French Governments such specific indications of Italy's desires as Mussolini might wish me to transmit. To the regret of humanity, the

chief of the Italian Government was unwilling to accept that procedure.

On this tenth day of June, 1940, the hand that held the dagger has stuck it into the back of his neighbour.

On this tenth day of June, 1940, from this University, founded by the great American teacher of democracy, we send forward our prayers and our hopes to those beyond the seas who are maintaining with magnificent valour their battle for freedom.

In American unity we will pursue two obvious and simultaneous courses: We will extend to the opponents of force the material resources of this nation, and harness and speed up the use of those resources in order that we ourselves may have the equipment and training equal to the task in any emergency. All roads leading to those objectives must be kept clear of obstructions. We will not slow down or make a detour. All signs and signals call for Full Speed Ahead.

MR. ATTLEE, IN A SPEECH IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, JUNE 11, 1940 :

As the House knows, Italy has declared war on Britain and France. Hardly ever before in history can the decision to embroil a great nation in war have been taken so wantonly and with so very little excuse. There is no quarrel between the Italians and the British and French peoples.

Since we became a nation we have never fought the Italians. On the other hand, when Italy, so long divided and, to a great extent, enslaved by Germans, sought in the nineteenth century to become a united nation, it was British sympathy and help, and French arms, that enabled her to attain her desires.

Great Britain and France have always been prepared to consider any real grievances that Italy might feel, and right up to this declaration of war have sought in every way to prevent the war spreading to the Mediterranean.

They have been patient under every kind of provocation and abuse. Why, then, has Italy now declared war? Because Signor Mussolini thinks that he sees a chance of securing some spoils at the expense of the Western Democracies.

Signor Mussolini uses the argument of the jackal that senses the possibility of getting some scraps from another beast's kill, the argument of the petty sneak-thief who hopes to rifle the pockets of a murderer's victim. This is the ignoble role that Signor Mussolini has chosen for the great Italian people, which has made such splendid contributions to European civilization in the past.

The victims whose spoils he hoped to share are not dead. The French people, never greater than in adversity, are fighting magnificently by sea, by air, and on their own soil of France. Britain, with all its strength in the air, by sea, and by land, is standing firmly by her side. The Italians, like the Germans, will find they have to meet a resolute resistance. . . . Italy, like Germany, will feel the blockade.

I say we have no ill-will to the Italian people. We are sorry they should be brought to the slaughter on account of the overweening ambition and lust for blood of the Duce, but we are prepared to meet the challenge.

The two Dictators have united to destroy democracy, and democracy will answer the challenge. From across the Atlantic has come the answer of a great democracy. It was as though the day followed the night when only a few hours after the Dictator of Italy had made his dastardly announcement before the serried ranks of the Blackshirts, the President of the U.S.A. sent to the youth of his country a message worthy of a great and free Republic.

Mr. Roosevelt has vitally inspired all the free peoples of Europe. His assurance that the material resources of this great industrial nation will be placed at the disposal of the Allies makes it inevitable that, however hard the road, the cause of civilization will in the end prevail.

Let me say to the House, and to the country, that this new attack does not cause us dismay. It makes no difference to our stern resolution to defeat all our enemies, or to our confidence in our ability to withstand all attacks and to achieve victory.

ITALY ENTERS THE WAR AT HER CHOSEN MOMENT: FASCIST DIPLOMACY SINCE 1922

Mussolini's Note to Britain and France—Mediterranean Question: 'Via' or 'Vita'?—African Aspirations—Stresa Conference—Laval's Part in the Abyssinian Crime—League Applies 'Sanctions' Against the Aggressor—Mussolini Begins to Support Hitler—Spanish Civil War—Rome-Berlin 'Axis'—Munich and After—Hostile Non-belligerency: Waiting for a Bloodless Conquest—The Irrevocable Step

At 4.30 p.m. on Monday, June 10, 1940, Count Ciano, the Italian Foreign Minister, received the French Ambassador and handed him a Note stating: "His Majesty the King and Emperor declares that from tomorrow, June 11, Italy considers herself at war with France." A quarter of an hour later an identical communication was made to the British Ambassador.

That same evening Mussolini addressed the crowd from the Palazzo Venezia [See also page 958]. He called on all to listen to him and said:

"The hour marked out by Destiny is sounding in the sky of our country. This is the hour of irrevocable decisions. The declaration of war has already been handed to the ambassadors of Britain and France. We are going to war against the plutocratic and reactionary democracies of the West, who have hindered the advance and often threatened the existence even of the Italian people."

He described the events of the preceding years as "half-promises, constant threats, blackmail and the League siege of fifty-two states." "Our conscience is absolutely tranquil," he proclaimed. And he further declared that the whole world was witness that Italy had used every endeavour to avoid the cataclysm, but that her efforts had been in vain. He held that a revision of the Treaties and acceptance of Hitler's proposals made in October could have secured peace. Yet that was past history now.

"A nation is not really great if it does not regard its undertakings as sacred," Mussolini proceeded, "and if it recoils

'Sacred Undertakings' from those supreme trials which decide the course of history." Italy was taking up arms to break off the chains "which are strangling us in our sea." This fight was but a logical consequence in the struggle of the oppressed against their exploiters, who would not part with any of the wealth and the gold of the earth which they possessed; it was the struggle of the young and fertile peoples against the sterile ones which were doomed to decline; it was a normal development of Italy's great revolution.

"I solemnly declare," concluded Mussolini, "that Italy does not intend to drag other peoples who are her neighbours into this conflict. Let Switzerland and Yugoslavia, Turkey, Egypt, and Greece take note of these words of mine, for it will depend entirely upon them if they are fully confirmed or not." Finally he emphasized that Italy had only one watchword—to conquer, "and we shall conquer, to give at last a long period of peace with justice to Italy, to Europe, to the world. People of Italy, to arms!"



MUSSOLINI DECLARES WAR

On June 10, 1940, Italy declared herself at war with France and Britain as from the next day. Here Mussolini is addressing a crowd in the Palazzo Venezia that evening.

Photo, Associated Press

Thus Italy's entry into the war—impending for many months—became an accomplished fact. To appreciate the causes and the timing of this "irrevocable decision" taken by Mussolini at a moment when the collapse of France could no longer be doubted, and barely ten days before she was forced to sue for an armistice, it is necessary to place Italy's relations with the Western democracies and Germany against a certain historical background. For years Italian diplomacy had combined the seemingly contradictory methods of exploiting

the prestige of victory and the dissatisfaction of defeat. On the one hand, Italy was "revisionist," like Germany or Hungary, whom by the way she greatly encouraged. On the other hand, Italy claimed that her armed forces had achieved great triumphs in the war—indeed, that they had saved France. The Italians held that they had been "swindled" by Britain and France in the Peace settlement after 1914-18, and that Italy had been allotted much less than her proper share in the spoils.

The fact is that by the London Treaty of April 26, 1915, Great Britain and France had promised Italy "equitable" compensation in case they themselves were to increase their colonial possessions in Africa at Germany's expense. Article 13 of that Treaty, which was extremely vague in its wording, did, however, refer specifically to frontier "rectification" in Libya, Jubaland and Eritrea. What Italy got eventually, and after much argument, was rather insignificant.

At the time it seemed as if it were largely a case of a new form being given to the perennial Franco-Italian rivalry—as if Enmity the old prestige conflict to Britain between these two adjoining Latin countries were at the bottom of it all. Yet in the light of more recent developments it is permissible to hold that the real, deep enmity of Mussolini's Italy, like that of Hitler's Germany, was reserved for Great Britain, and that hostility towards France was only a minor issue. Britain's domination of the Mediterranean caused as much rancour with Mussolini as the existence and power of the British Commonwealth of Nations had done for many decades with the Germans. The Italians have a neat formula that sums up the situation. They say that to the British the Mediterranean means but a road ("Via"), while to Italy it means life ("Vita"), and that therefore they must obtain control of so vital an area.

Be this as it may, during the first twelve years of the Fascist dictatorship in Italy—1922 to 1934—relations with France were for the most part strained,

while those with Britain bore, at least outwardly, a friendly appearance. The Italians seemed to have so many things to demand of France by way of "reparations" that they could never be induced to formulate the nature of their claims. But in 1934 the international scene began to undergo far-reaching and dramatic changes. On February 6 of that year the Stavisky riots took place in Paris, which altered the political situation in France overnight. Within barely a week of that event—namely on February 12—Dollfuss, Austria's diminutive Chancellor, launched the police and the Heimwehr (a private army organized as a Fascist militia) against the workmen of Vienna, abolished the constitution, and proclaimed a "Christian dictatorship" in its place. This act of suicidal folly was taken under Mussolini's guidance and inspiration. From then onwards the Austrian government was entirely dependent on Italy's support, and Mussolini propped up Dollfuss because he did not want Austria to be swallowed by the increasingly active Hitler. On June 30 the first sensational "purge" took place in Berlin, when Roehm, Schleicher, and many others were brutally murdered by Hitler. Less than a month afterwards, on July 25, Dollfuss was assassinated by Hitler's hirelings in Vienna. The whole of Europe was shaken and worried, but especially France.

Barthou, one of the most experienced and vigorous Foreign Ministers the French have ever had, developed great activity in a somewhat belated attempt to strengthen his country's international position in the face of the growing German danger. Among the measures envisaged by him was the improvement



FRANCO-ITALIAN PACT

M. Laval (on the left) is seen above signing at Rome, on January 7, 1935, a Franco-Italian protocol by which certain territorial concessions were made by France to Italy in North Africa, extending the frontiers of Italian Libya. There is reason to think that Laval also discussed with Mussolini (on extreme right) other and more weighty matters.

Photo, Keystone

of relations with Italy. But in October Barthou and King Alexander of Yugoslavia, who had come to France on a state visit, were assassinated at Marseilles. Here again the real instigator of the crime is easy to recognize. Before the grim year was over two further events of importance took place, though little heeded at the time. A rebellion broke out in Spain, and in a tiny and remote spot called Walwal, in the East African desert, a military clash occurred on December 7 between a detachment of wandering Ethiopians and an Italian outpost. With this the scene for the coming European drama was finally set.

In January, 1935, M. Laval, the Premier of France and also Barthou's

successor as Foreign Minister, went to Rome to have some personal negotiations with Mussolini with a view to settling the old disputes between Italy and France, and to securing Mussolini as an ally against Germany. The visit lasted a few days, and resulted in a number of small concessions and also in territorial adjustments in Africa to be made by France in Italy's favour. There is reason to believe, however, that Mussolini and Laval had discussed something else, and that the French Premier, in consideration for Mussolini's support in Europe, had promised the Italian dictator a free hand in Abyssinia.

We know now that Mussolini had been preparing for the conquest of an African empire since 1933, and that at the time of Laval's visit to Rome his decision to begin the campaign in the autumn of that year (1935) was already taken; indeed, that the Walwal incident was a deliberate prelude to this contemplated aggression. Laval was preoccupied with the Germans—not the Ethiopians. And so were the British, whom Mussolini also consulted, and who gave a non-committal reply. The Italian dictator, therefore, began to ship troops and supplies to Somaliland and Eritrea, his two colonies bordering on Ethiopia. Britain and France, who control the Suez Canal and must therefore have been aware of these troop movements, raised no objection.

Meanwhile, there burst like a bomb-shell upon Paris Hitler's defiant declaration on March 16, abolishing the disarmament clauses of the Versailles Treaty and proclaiming his intention to rearm Germany at full speed. British

Designs on Ethiopia



THE STRESA CONFERENCE

Seen left to right above, during the Stresa Conference in April, 1935, are Laval, Mussolini, Ramsay MacDonald and Flandin. This three-power conference of Great Britain, France and Italy had as its object the collective maintenance of peace within the framework of the League of Nations, and it condemned the unilateral repudiation of treaties by Germany.

Photo, Keystone



and French diplomats were confused, travelling from capital to capital in pursuit of a riposte to the Fuehrer. Eventually they decided to hold a conference at Stresa, on the Italian Lake Maggiore, and there it was that the representatives of Britain, France and Italy passed a number of resolutions about disarmament and the settlement of European affairs. But the important fact about the Stresa Conference is that once again Mussolini inquired from France and Britain about their attitude towards his contemplated African campaign, and that once again their ambiguous reply justified his belief that the Western democracies would raise no

ITALIANS IN ABYSSINIA AND IN SPAIN

When in 1935 the Italians embarked upon their conquest of Abyssinia, their engineers speedily made smooth the path for the men and guns and motor-lorries, despite the rough nature of the terrain and the almost total lack of roads. This photograph shows the evening assembly during the construction of the Imperial Highway between Dessie and Addis Ababa, the Abyssinian capital. On the left is a group of Italians taken prisoner in Spain by the Government side after the rout of the Nationalists at Guadalajara; they are seen in a Madrid dungeon.

Photos, Mondiale; Wide World

objections to his aggression against the Ethiopians.

Then Britain made a naval agreement with Hitler which exasperated the French, who, for their part, followed it up by a military agreement with Stalin. The League of Nations at Geneva, to which the Abyssinian Emperor, Haile Selassie, was making continuous and vain appeals against the coming Italian invasion, was reduced to a mere farce. But, all of a sudden, it began to look as if Britain were now determined to make the League an effective and powerful instrument for maintaining international law and order. Sir Samuel Hoare, the British Foreign Secretary, stated in Geneva on September 11, 1935, that "the League stands, and my country stands with it, for the collective maintenance of the Covenant in its entirety and particularly for steady and collective resistance to all acts of unprovoked aggression."

Yet on the very eve of making this speech Sir Samuel Hoare had agreed with Laval that in no circumstances would Britain and France take military measures against Italy or close the Suez Canal or do anything else "that might lead to war." Mussolini must have known this, but in any case he attached

no great importance to Geneva's verbiage. On October 2 he proclaimed national mobilization in Italy, and next day the invasion of Abyssinia began.

Whereupon, under Britain's leadership, fifty-two nations represented at Geneva decided to apply economic "sanctions" to the aggressor. The Western Ineffective democracies saw to it, 'Sanctions' however, that these sanctions did not include the one measure which might have stopped Mussolini's war: an embargo on oil and coal, the essential fuels of which Italy possessed none. The only result of the sanctions policy was to infuriate the Italians and to rally round Mussolini the latently anti-Fascist elements which had been opposed to the war.

Finally, Great Britain chose to abandon the situation she had herself created, and to drop both the sanctions and collective security which these were supposed to promote and represent. This gave the impression that the sending of the British Home Fleet to the Mediterranean had been but an idle threat. Mussolini won his war against the Abyssinians, but he never forgave Britain for the part she had taken in mobilizing world opinion against

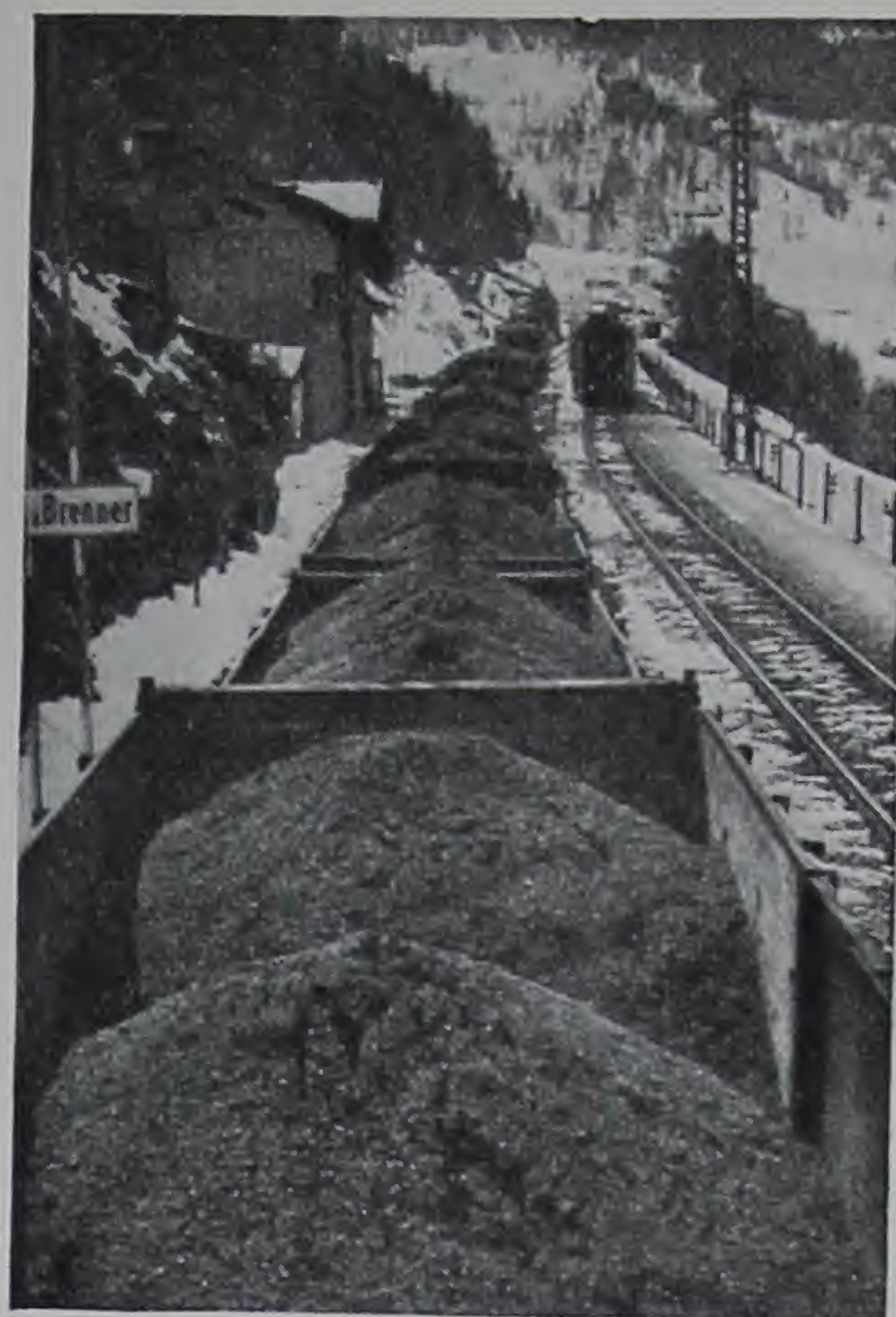
him—nor France for not openly dissociating herself from this British policy.

The inglorious behaviour of the British and French Governments in this Abyssinian affair convinced Mussolini that there was nothing to be gained from siding with the Western democracies. Meanwhile, Hitler had achieved a series of further spectacular and provocative successes against them. The Duce had not previously had very much regard for Hitler, whom he once described as "that garrulous monk," and for a while he had even acted in open opposition to the Fuehrer, going as far as sending Italian troops to the Brenner Pass when a German invasion of Austria seemed imminent. But the situation had changed since those days. And Hitler, who in the various stages of his career had appeared to Mussolini as a disciple, as a rival, and even as a danger to Italy, now began to assume the character of a quite desirable satellite.

A shrewd and clear-sighted politician, Mussolini was a complete cynic and opportunist. He had known how to balance himself between two parties in such a manner as to get something out of both. And he never concealed his determination to tilt the scales to the advantage of the stronger party. Without forsaking the possibility of "selling out" to Britain and France if

a suitable occasion were to arise, he began to cooperate closely with Hitler. In July, 1936, civil war broke out in Spain. General Franco led the revolt against the Spanish Republican Government. Both Hitler and Mussolini had realized for a long time that a dictatorship in Spain, established with their support and sympathetic to them, would be of immense advantage to Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, while at the same time constituting an open threat to Britain and France. So from the start Hitler and Mussolini openly gave their support to General Franco.

Once again the democracies shut their eyes to the real issue and wasted time in futile tergiversations. Not only was Mussolini shipping whole divisions of Italian "volunteers" to Spain, but his submarines were torpedoing British and French ships. On the other hand, the Germans used the Spanish war for testing out their latest 'planes, tanks, and other weapons. Apart from one half-hearted move—the convening in September, 1937, of the Nyon Conference to decide on a course of retaliation against the "pirate" submarines in the Mediterranean (Italy and Germany did not attend)—the Western democracies showed little capacity for action of any kind. Hitler and Mussolini, who had now come together so closely that they con-



ITALY'S VITAL NEED

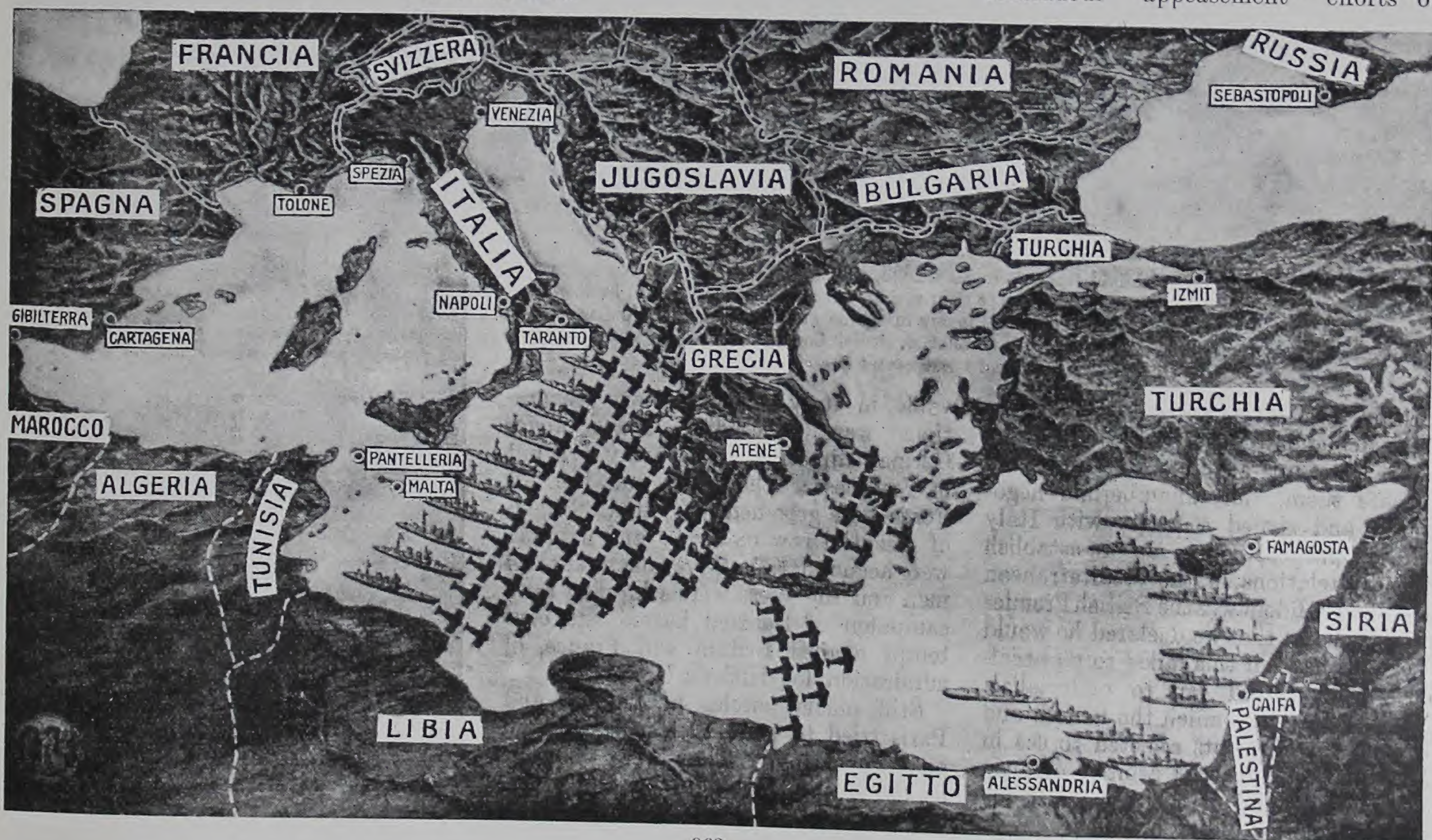
Since Italy is not a coal-producing country, her sources of supply in war are restricted to those of her Axis partner. Above, truck-loads of German coal are seen passing over the Brenner Pass on the way to Italy. In quality it could not compare with British coal.

Photo, Keystone

FASCIST WISHFUL THINKING

The map below was published by the Italian newspaper "Il Tevere." According to the caption it "proves beyond all doubt" that Italy would be successful in destroying the Allied Mediterranean Fleet. Events showed that Mussolini's trust in his air arm had been over-optimistic.

Photo, Wide World





On September 3, 1939, the Western democracies declared war on Germany. From that very day Mussolini quite openly and avowedly behaved not like a neutral, but like Hitler's ally. A formula was coined: hostile, yet "non-belligerent." There can be no doubt that during the months that followed Italy rendered the greatest services to Germany. Her territory constituted the biggest hole in the British blockade, especially the port of Trieste. Her embassies and legations, her newspaper correspondents abroad, her large resident colonies in various parts of the world were openly helping Hitler. Mean-

therefore ignored all these hostile manifestations. Repeatedly they even offered to negotiate on the French question, and France asked more than once what it was that Mussolini actually wanted—for he had never covered with his own personal authority the "spontaneous" demands for Nice, Tunis, and Corsica. The Italians arrogantly replied that they would only talk to a defeated France.

In May, 1940, the position began to look so threatening that British shipping had to be diverted from the Mediterranean to the long route round the Cape. Yet official circles in London



STUDENTS' DEMONSTRATIONS IN ROME

Incited by the Fascist press, Italian students in May, 1940, staged many demonstrations against Britain and France. Above, some of them are seen racing across the Piazza Venezia in Rome, waving an Italian flag. Below, the British Embassy in Rome guarded by Italian soldiers and police against demonstrators. Top, left, Sir Noel Charles, British Counsellor at Rome at that time.

Photos, Universal; Associated Press

Britain and France resulted only in fresh demands by the predatory Powers each time an attempt was made to placate them. Mr. Chamberlain negotiated and signed a treaty with Italy whose purpose was to re-establish friendly relations in the Mediterranean area. So confident was the British Premier of his success that he declared he would "eat his hat" if this failed to materialize. But it did fail to materialize. Nevertheless, at Munich the British and French Governments affected to see in Mussolini an impartial arbiter, or even a friend, instead of their bitterest foe who was merely biding his time.

while, in Italy herself military preparations were proceeding apace under German direction. The Army was put in readiness; the Fleet and the Air Force were groomed for action. Stocks of essential raw materials and supplies were accumulated. Government spokesmen and the Press were whipping up a campaign of frenzied hatred and contempt against Britain and France, of admiration for Hitler's Germany.

Still official circles in London and Paris tried to shut their eyes and go on "appeasing." They were obsessed by the idea of Mussolini possibly proving "useful" at some future date, and



continued to indulge in "sunshine" talk, and the inspired Press echoed their quite astonishing optimism. The Italian papers, on the other hand, were openly jubilant at the Allied fiasco in Norway. Their "Schadenfreude" and their abuse of Britain knew no bounds. On May 18 the "Popolo d'Italia" said, "We consider ourselves in fact as having already intervened," and the following day Count Ciano declared, "Italy cannot remain absent from the present terrible struggle which will forge the destinies of the world." Nevertheless, that very same Count Ciano was having frequent conferences with Sir Noel Charles, the British Counsellor in Rome, while the Italian Ambassador in London was also having talks with Lord Halifax.

On May 20 the German General von Epp arrived in Rome and also a Japanese official trade mission. Three days later, despite all that had happened, Sir Wilfrid Greene, the Master of the Rolls, also arrived in Rome, in order (it was explained) to renew his contacts with the Italian Government as Chairman of the British Delegation to the Anglo-Italian Joint Standing Committee. This committee was set up at the beginning of the war to provide convenient machinery for the discussion between the British and Italian Governments of economic matters. In spite of the astonishingly lenient treatment of Italy in the matter of the British blockade, the intention was to relax it still further as a friendly

gesture. The British Press was full of optimistic statements about the progress of these economic talks.

During the days that followed the final preparations were being made for a decisive action. On May 26, in the presence of Marshal Graziani and the Under-Secretary for War, Mussolini received the leaders of Italian industry and gave them his orders with regard to artillery construction. Later he had a conference with the army commanders and the heads of the mobilization department of the War Ministry. On the same day the text was published of the Bill to "control citizens in wartime." Different duties, civilian and military, were apportioned to all male citizens from fourteen to seventy, and special



MONARCH GREET'S DICTATOR

Above, the nominal ruler of Italy, King Victor Emmanuel III (left), shakes hands with the virtual ruler, Benito Mussolini.

Photo, Wide World

On May 31 it was announced that the Italian Government had broken off the economic negotiations initiated by Sir Wilfrid Greene, and on the following day "Relazioni Internazionali" said:

"The moment we have been waiting for for fifty years has arrived. The Italian people will fight their French and British enemies with greatest determination until complete victory. It is not logical that France and Britain should have political power in the Mediterranean and thus exercise control over the development of the Italian nation."

Italy's eyes were turned towards Nice, Corsica, Tunis and the Suez Canal, said that same journal.

"The word is now for the forces of land, sea and sky of Fascist Italy . . . we have no scruples."

On June 4 M. Reynaud, the French Prime Minister, made a statement about relations with Italy which still left the door open for negotiations. But it was quite clear that Mussolini had by now reached his "irrevocable decision" and was only watching the tragic "battle of France" to choose the moment when he could stab the French in the back with a minimum of risk. On June 10 he declared war and assumed the duties of supreme commander of Italy's armed forces, while the actual command of the army was delegated to Marshal Badoglio. The last act of this tragic farce was a proclamation issued on June 11 by the King of Italy, who said that he joined the ranks of the armed forces, "thereby following the dictates of my heart and the traditions of my house."



CATHOLIC MOUTHPIECE

Count Della Torre (above) earned the enmity of the Fascist newspapers by his unbiased reports of the international situation in the Vatican newspaper "Osservatore Romano," of which he was director.

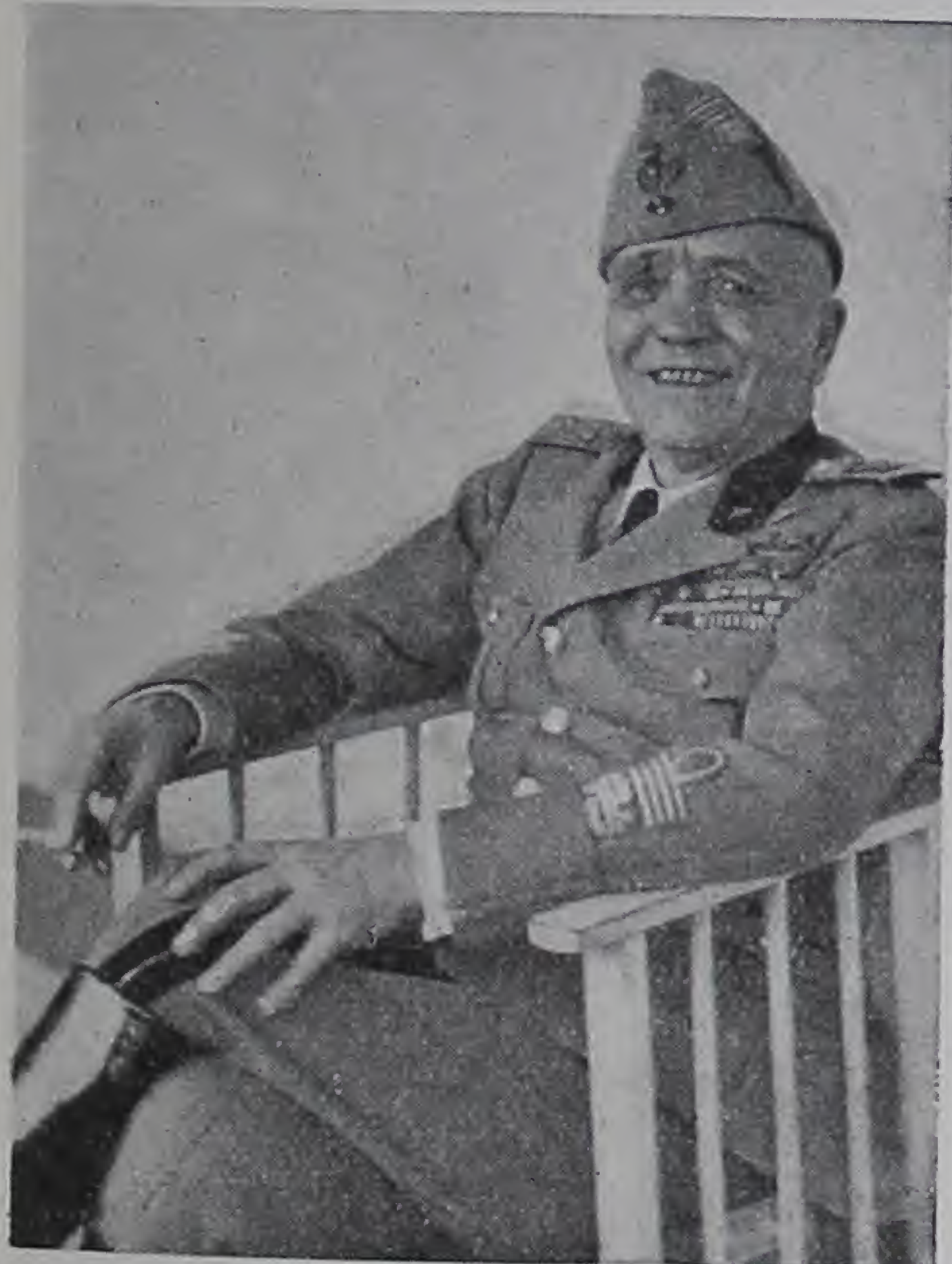
Photo, Wide World

services were made obligatory for women between fourteen and sixty. To save petrol the use of private motor-cars was prohibited as from June 1.

Two of Mussolini's most frequently used "mouthpieces" made statements. Speaking at Florence, Farinacci said, "the place of Italy is by the side of the heroic Germany of Hitler, which is struggling against the common enemy."

Gayda declared in his newspaper that Italy had forced the Allies to keep 1,200,000 men on her borders or on those of her colonies.

"This is solid, silent help which Italy has given Germany during these eight months of war."



MARSHAL BADOGLIO

Marshal Pietro Badoglio (above), Chief of the Italian General Staff until December, 1940, was created Duke of Addis Ababa for his services during the Abyssinian war.

Photo, Wide World

FROM THE MARNE TO THE LOIRE: CLOSING STAGES OF THE BATTLE OF FRANCE

Germans Cross the Marne and the Seine—Paris an Open Town—A New B.E.F. Lands in France—The Nazis Occupy Paris—Magenot Line Pierced—Reynaud Resigns, and Pétain Asks for an Armistice—Where the French Armies Stood at Bay—Armistice Signed with Germany, but Mussolini Launches an Attack—Franco-Italian Armistice—A Summing Up

WHEN at midnight on June 10 France was faced by the threat of an Italian attack in the Alps, the German troops were rapidly converging on Paris. The Weygand Zone had been completely overrun. The Somme and the Aisne had both been left far behind by the tide of battle, which now swept on towards the Marne; even the Seine had been crossed in many places by the German armoured units. Nazi tanks had made their appearance in the suburbs of Rouen; Soissons had fallen, and Rheims was threatened. The invaders had passed Beauvais; and here, where the thrust was deepest, they were only 25 or 30 miles from the outskirts of Paris.

Obviously, the capital was doomed, and on June 10 the French Government left for Tours. At the same time, the headquarters of the army were transferred from La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, east of Meaux, to Briare on the Loire, some 80 miles to the south of Paris.

By June 11 the plight of the French armies along the line from the coast to Malmédy had become much worse. Out of the 43 infantry divisions which had been in place on June 4 at least nine had been practically wiped out, twelve had been reduced to a quarter of their strength, and eleven cut down to half by casualties suffered since the opening of the German invasion. This left nine regular and nine light divisions at something like full strength. The 6th Army was along the Marne; on its left, in front of Rheims, was the 4th Army, extended to Monthois. The line east to Longuyon should have been continued by the 2nd Army, but in fear of envelopment its commander had drawn back to Grandpré and Dun-sur-Meuse, leaving a gap. Covering Paris on the north was the French 7th Army, between Chantilly and the Ourcq.

The battle, now in its eighth day, raged furiously along the whole front. The Germans were across the Seine at several points near Rouen. To the east of the Oise, the main body of the defenders was already in full retreat to the Marne, and only a rearguard

endeavoured to hinder the German advance. Still farther to the east, the enemy brought into action masses of heavy tanks in an effort to outflank Rheims from the west and south-west, and in Champagne fresh enemy divisions were brought up during the night and flung into action south of the Aisne against opponents who for days had borne the onslaught of tanks and dive-bombers. Yet many of the French



FLIGHT FROM PARIS

As the German soldiers drew nearer to Paris thousands fled from the city, and the roads southward were soon congested with masses of vehicles like those above, in which families had piled up belongings in frantic haste.

Photo, Associated Press

troops were still fighting magnificently and the Germans were said to show signs of strain. If the attack could be held for two or three days longer, all might yet be saved; that was the optimistic picture conveyed in official communiqués from Paris.

But Hitler was resolved to give his enemy no respite. The next day, June 12, so far from showing any signs of slackening, the Germans accentuated their efforts on the Seine in an endeavour to extend the bridgeheads which they had already established on the south

bank of the river. Violent attacks were directed against the French holding the line west of Meaux, and on the Marne, near Château-Thierry, the enemy again made contact with the main French forces and obtained a footing on the opposite bank.

At Rheims, new tank and motorized units—report spoke of an entire mechanized corps, comprising three or four armoured divisions and two or three motorized divisions—were thrown into the struggle, and the French, wearied

**French
Retreat
Continues**

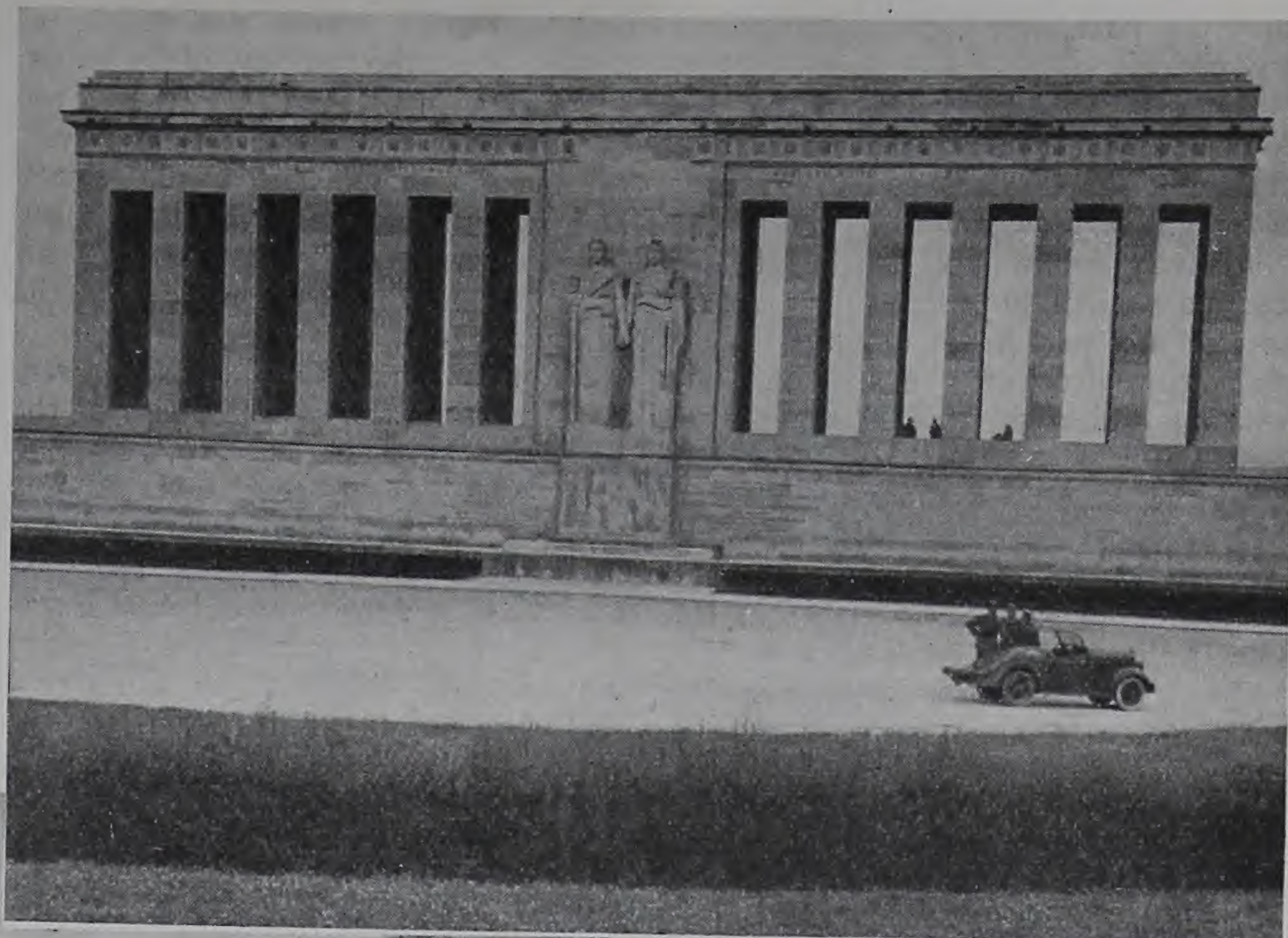
by the strain of constant battle, and outnumbered, were again forced to withdraw. The German communiqué spoke of numerous French counter-attacks in Champagne, some of them supported by tanks, but it claimed—and, as it turned out, with truth—that all their efforts were unable to bring the German advance to a standstill. Rouen, it went on to state, had been in German hands for several days; and so, too, was Compiègne, “scene of the humiliating Armistice dictated in 1918”; the Seine below Paris had been crossed at several points, and an Allied force of 20,000 men—later stated to include two brigades of the British 51st Division—had been surrounded at the little port of St. Valéry; a great number of transports had been taken, together with quantities of arms and war material, “which cannot, at present, even be estimated.” At the nearest point the Germans were only 12½ miles from Paris.

Meanwhile, in the Alps all was quiet. The first Italian communiqué of the war, issued on the morning of June 11, merely stated that: “At midnight on June 10 the prearranged disposition of our land, sea, and air forces was carried out in perfect order.”

Within the next 24 hours the situation worsened. On both sides of Paris the battle increased in violence, as, on the one hand, motorized and armoured columns crossed the Seine at the bridgeheads established at Louviers, Les Andelys and Vernon, and, on the other, pushed across the Marne near Château-Thierry, while other divisions

swept past Rheims, which by now was in German hands, and drove rapidly in the direction of Châlons-sur-Marne. What was still more ominous, the German left wing, by attacking between Vouziers and Montmédy, was threatening to turn the Maginot Line, the only part of the French front which still remained intact.

Already the French Cabinet, meeting on June 12 in a château near Tours, had been informed by General Weygand that the situation was desperate, and that application for an armistice was well-nigh unavoidable. Not a whisper of this was allowed to appear in the Press as yet, but even the most confirmed and deluded optimist must have grasped the significance of the announcement,



U.S. SHRINE IN FRANCE

This monument at Château-Thierry was erected after the war of 1914-18 in memory of the American soldiers who fell in France. Reached by the Germans on June 12, 1940, Château-Thierry was again reduced to ruins, as the photograph on the left testifies. The monument, however, was undamaged.

Photos, Associated Press



made on the morning of June 13, that, with a view to saving it from destruction by air bombardment, Paris was now an open town. The military governor, General Hering, who had been in charge since the departure of the Government, now handed over his command to General Dentz, while he himself assumed an army command at the front. The police and firemen were ordered to stay at their posts, and though no orders were given to evacuate the city, the pitiful exodus of refugees increased in volume. A sinister silence had descended upon the city, so lately gay and bustling; the streets were deserted, the newspapers failed to appear, and only the most guarded announcements were made over the wireless. Even the skies were darkened by the smoke drifting slowly from the zone of battle, now come so near.

Before the day closed the French were heartened by a renewal of the British

pledge to give the utmost aid in their power to their ally and, still more, by the news that a new B.E.F. had gone to France. "South of the Seine," read an official announcement issued in London, "fresh British troops recently arrived from the United Kingdom, and have taken their place in the line with their French comrades." It went on to add that "the fine bearing and march discipline of these troops has had an excellent effect and has done much to maintain the morale of the Allied troops, who have been fighting day and night to stem the German advance." This new B.E.F. was reported to be magnificently equipped with artillery of the latest type and with large numbers of anti-aircraft guns; and though the troops were, for the most part, newly-trained men, all the officers and the majority of the staffs had been through the fire at Dunkirk and come out smiling.

"First-class British troops have been rolling up along French roads towards the Seine during the last few days," wrote "Eye-Witness" on June 14. "Let me say right away that, in the words of a sergeant-major of a Scottish regiment whom I saw just behind the Seine front this afternoon, these men of the new force are 'bursting to get at the enemy.' These fresh fighting men may play an important part in the present critical stage of the war in France. I found the soldiers of the new force at the front filled with admiration for the long fight by a division [presumably the 51st (Highland) Division] which was fighting continuously for five weeks before part of it was captured. They besieged me with questions about it. Many of them were old soldiers with rugged, lined faces who knew all about the division. 'Aye, domned fine lads, yon division,' men of a Scottish regiment said. The officers and men of the Seine force are in excellent spirits. They know they have been flung into the battle in the face of a great German army which has advanced steadily for five weeks. This has not rattled them at all. They know they have a stiff job to do, and they are going to do it. Now they are in contact with the Germans who have forced the Lower Seine at several bridgeheads. Like the men of Scotland,

they will hold their positions in face of any odds."

But this British aid arrived too late to be of any real effectiveness in turning the tide of battle; a Canadian division, although it was actually landed in Normandy while the Battle of the Somme was still in progress, was unable to take any part in the actual fighting, and was afterwards evacuated, not without difficulty, from France's west coast ports.

At the same time, the help rendered by the Royal Air Force was of the very greatest value. Enemy concentrations advancing to take their places in the line were heavily bombed; convoys were wrecked, mechanized columns scattered, road junctions blocked, ammunition and supply dumps blown up

and destroyed, woods and fields set ablaze. From the first days of the battle, when the men of the R.A.F. were given the task of blowing up the bridges across the Meuse which French inefficiency had left intact, until the last, when France was in collapse, Britain's air arm did magnificent service to the common cause.

By this time the Germans were boasting that the second phase of the gigantic campaign in the West had been victoriously concluded. "The resistance of the French Northern Front has broken down; the Seine has been crossed over a wide area below Paris, and Le Havre has been taken. The enemy is retreating along the entire front extending from Paris to the Maginot Line at Sedan. German tanks

and motorized divisions have in several places overtaken and pierced the retreating enemy columns. In the retreat the enemy has abandoned his entire equipment"—these are passages taken from a communiqué issued by the German High Command on June 14. Then the communiqué proceeded to announce that the defences of Paris had been overrun by the German infantry, that the French were no longer able to defend their capital, and that the victorious German troops had actually marched into Paris.

Telephoning from Paris to his colleague, Mr. A. Drexel Biddle, in Tours at 7 o'clock on the evening of June 13, Mr. William Bullitt, U.S. Ambassador to France, announced that the German army were inside the gates of Paris.

This was a little premature, however, for that night the Germans halted at the outer suburbs of the capital. According to a German account, Nazi officers sent "an open message over the radio" demanding the surrender of the city, in which case it would be treated as a non-belligerent zone; following this they attempted to get into touch with the military authorities in the city under a flag of truce. But this effort failed because the German delegates were fired on by mistake by Senegalese troops holding the gates. An American report has it that it was Mr. Bullitt who, at the request of General Dentz, transmitted to the German Government in Berlin the formal notification that the city had been declared open and that all the garrison had been withdrawn.

So the night passed, in a state of gloomy expectancy. Hundreds of thousands, some accounts said millions, of the Parisian population had sought safety in flight, and those who remained kept within doors. The main boulevards, the café terraces, the great squares, the famous shopping streets—all now were practically deserted; on the city of light had fallen a gross darkness. Now and again the fateful silence was broken by the dull boom of explosions as one or other of the armament factories on the outskirts were destroyed by Government order. The leaden sky was reddened by fires.

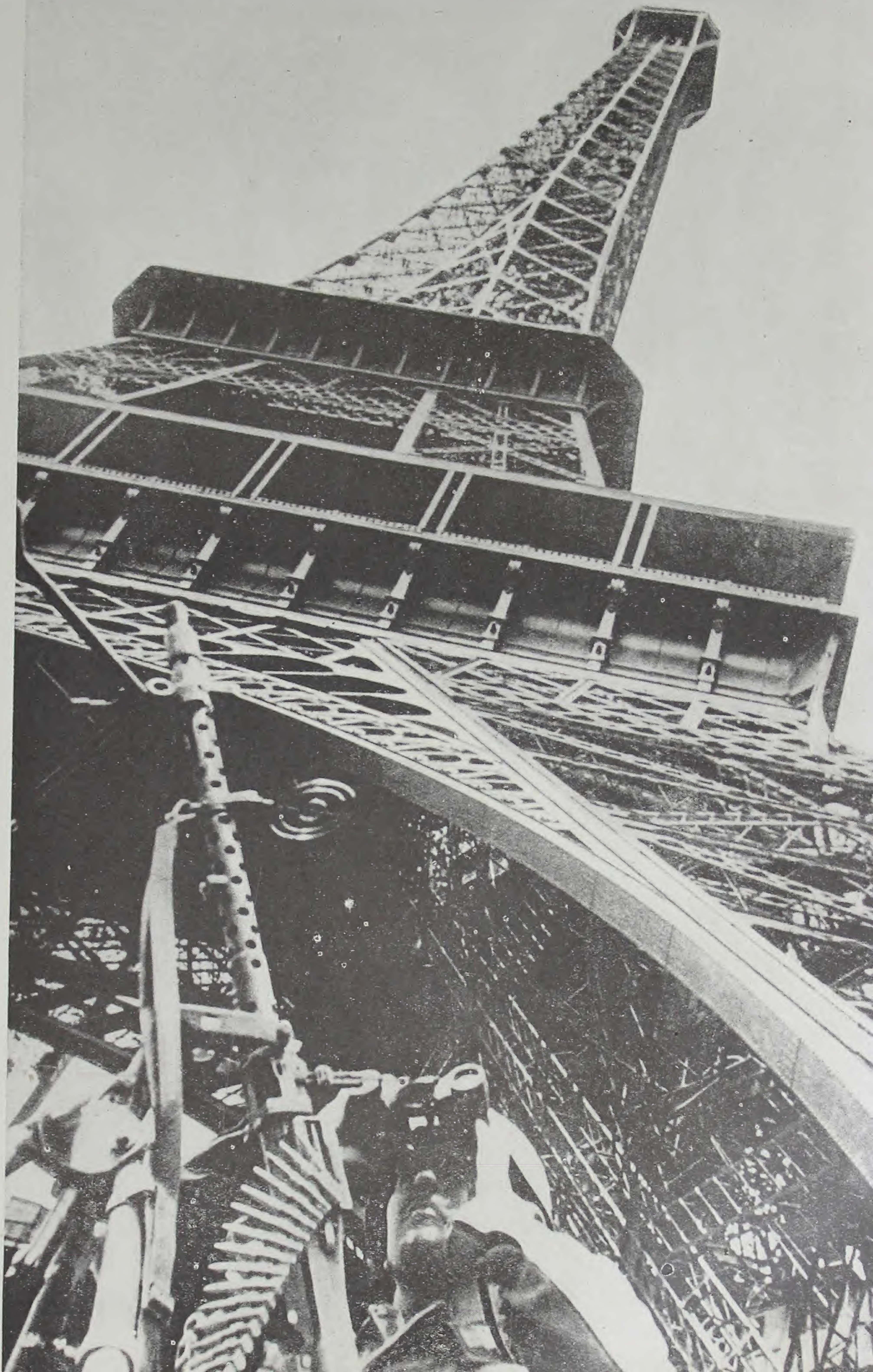
At midnight the city gates were shut and barred by civil guards, and those of the refugees who had not succeeded in making their exit perforce returned to their homes. The police were now instructed to hand in their arms to their superiors so as to become a purely civilian force. In a state of anxious suspense Paris awaited the arrival of the conquerors.



WHEN THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT WAS AT TOURS

On June 10, 1940, the French Government left Paris for Tours, Paris remaining in charge of the military authorities. Above, M. Reynaud is seen outside the château near Tours which became the temporary seat of the Government, examining documents handed to him by M. Baudouin, his Under-Secretary. On the left is General Weygand; in the background, Marshal Pétain.

E.N.A.



**EIFFEL TOWER IN
GERMAN HANDS**

On June 14, 1940, German troops entered Paris once more after a lapse of 70 years. In this photograph a Nazi anti-aircraft gunner is seen on the look-out at the foot of the Eiffel Tower, for so many years used by the French as a wireless station.

Photo, Associated Press



RELIEF MAP SHOWING GERMAN THRUSTS INTO FRANCE, WITH APPROXIMATE DATES



A German tank fording the River Ourcq in the middle of June, 1940. In many places the Germans used lines of tanks as bridges to permit passage of troops.



Bomb craters near Verdun, whose fortresses were the scene of heroic French resistance throughout the war of 1914-18. It fell into German hands on June 15, 1940.



FRANCE IN THE HANDS OF THE NAZIS

The outskirts of Strasbourg, showing one of the bridges blown up by the French before they evacuated the city. Left, this map of France shows, with the approximate dates, the German thrusts into the interior. The black arrows indicate the axes of the main German thrusts. The darker portion show the occupied territory as laid down in the Franco-German and Franco-Italian armistice terms.

Relief Map specially drawn for THE SECOND GREAT WAR by Félix Gardon. Photos, Keystone Associated Press; E.N.A.



PARIS REMAINED UNDAMAGED BUT HUMILIATED

Passing across the vast Place de la Concorde in Paris, where once so many Frenchmen were guillotined during the Revolution which sought to uphold the 'Rights of Man,' Nazi invaders are watched in silence by a crowd of Frenchmen who have been betrayed by politicians to whom the 'Rights of Man' were of less account than power and money. Haunted by memories of the 'Commune,' the Government preferred to hand over Paris intact to the enemy rather than see its resistance organized by 'the people.'

Photo, Associated Press

Soon after 7 a.m. the first German troops—some motor-cyclists armed with rifles and machine-guns—entered the city and took up their positions just inside the boundary near the Auber-villiers Gate, but it was three hours later that the main body began their march into Paris. Column by column they goose-stepped through the streets, past houses and shops closed and shuttered. Here and there a handful of civilians stood on the pavements to watch the traditional enemy enter Paris for the second time in seventy years; others with heavy hearts and downcast faces peered cautiously from between the drawn blinds. One of the first places to be secured was the wireless station of Radio Paris, and shortly afterwards the swastika flag was run up on the Eiffel Tower.

All day long the city resounded with the noise of tanks rumbling past the Arc de Triomphe down the Champs Elysées to the Place de la Concorde,

Nazi Tanks in Paris Streets

with the dull tramp of the marching infantry, the clatter and rattle of innumerable transport vehicles. Machine-gun posts were established at the street corners and other vantage points; then the soldiers bivouacked in the streets and squares prior to being billeted in the public buildings and great hotels. By nightfall

numbers of the Nazi soldiery were wandering about the city, gazing in the shop windows filled with the things that they never saw now in the Reich, staring at the splendour which they had been told so much about, and which now had become their prey. Only a few of the cafés remained open, and from 9 p.m. the strictest curfew was enforced; for the first time Paris's black-out was really complete. The only sound in the hours of dark was the tramp of the German sentries and the unceasing rattle of men and vehicles as German detachments crossed the city on their way to the battle now raging beyond its southern suburbs.

That day's communiqué from French G.H.Q. was couched in pregnant phraseology. "On both sides of Paris," it read, "the enemy pushed still further. Owing to this advance the troops covering Paris retreated on both sides of the town in accordance with orders received. In refraining from direct defence of the capital, which is now an open town, the French command aimed at sparing it the devastation which defence would have involved. The Command considered that no valuable strategic result justified the sacrifice of Paris." Looking back, it is now clear that when Paris fell France lost heart; but still for a week and more the fighting went on. Yet the situation looked

hopeless, with the German armies across the Seine, heading in the direction of the Loire, while to the east the defences in Champagne had been shattered and the Maginot Line turned.

Having turned down General Wey-gand's suggestion of asking for an armistice, the French Government had now to take drastic steps to save the armies from encirclement. It was decided on June 12 to abandon the Maginot Line, in whose fortresses the garrisons were left, and to withdraw southwards. The remnant of the 10th Army was forced back upon Rennes, leaving a gap between Evreux and Passy through which the enemy advanced to Dreux by the 14th. In the centre a wedge was driven through the 6th Army, while the 2nd Army, on the right, was bent back upon the Orain. French troops returned from Norway had been landed at Brest on the 15th to hold a line between the port and Rennes.

The 7th Army had been marshalled for the defence of the capital, together with the Army of Paris under General Héring. When Paris was declared an open town (on the 13th) these armies fell back towards the Loire. Five days later the enemy reached this river to the west of Orléans, but on the 17th Marshal

NAZIS IN THE HEART OF PARIS

The famous Place de la Concorde, in Paris, normally one of the busiest spots of the French capital, is seen here almost deserted as detachments of Nazi troops move across it. This photograph, radio'd from New York to Paris, shows the sandbagged base of the Luxor Obelisk on the left, and the Eiffel Tower on the right.

Photo, Associated Press



Pétain had opened negotiations with the German High Command.

The communiqué issued on the night of Sunday, June 16, stated that enemy attacks had been renewed on the whole battle front, and it was now admitted that part at least of the Maginot Line had been evacuated owing to the progress made by the German sweep to the west. Following the breakthrough in Champagne, the enemy delivered a fanwise advance whose most spectacular achievement was the capture, on June 15, of Verdun, that great fortress which in 1916 became the symbol of France's will to win. In this war a few days sufficed to bring about its fall. In 1940 they *did* pass at Verdun.

Once again it was reported that during the last 24 hours the battle had reached a new high point of intensity. The enemy, possessed as he was of an enormous superiority in

150 Divisions troops and material,

Engaged was constantly throwing fresh reserves into the fight; 150 divisions, it was estimated, were now engaged in the battle on the Western Front, and even the forces in occupation of Poland had been denuded in order that the German strength in France should be maintained and increased. "Yet," said the French official war communiqué issued on June 16, "our troops continue to fight with the same bravery, offering fierce resistance to the invader in spite of the latter's superiority in material and effectives."

With amazing swiftness the Germans continued their drive into Central France, threatening, on the one hand, the French defences on the Loire and, on the other, the divisions now practically surrounded in Alsace-Lorraine and in that tomb of an outmoded strategy, the Maginot Line. Already, on June 16, the Germans were claiming that the Line, so recently deemed impregnable, had been pierced on the Saar, and that the whole front from the Channel to Switzerland was in "victorious movement." It was stated that the French were in full retreat, and were being pursued by "mechanized and non-mechanized forces which are vying with each other in forced marches, and are often overtaking the fleeing and exhausted enemy."

The Nazi communiqués spoke of waves of aeroplanes attacking with great success the French detachments retreating to the Loire by road and rail; south-east of Paris and on the Upper Marne strong tank and motorized divisions were advancing unceasingly southwards; the Plateau of Langres, north of Dijon, had been

crossed, so that the line of retreat of the French forces retiring from the Rhine and the Saar had been cut.

Meanwhile, in the northern sector of the front, north-west and west of Paris, British armoured units and infantry were fighting desperate rear-guard actions side by side with their French allies. Western Normandy, Maine and Poitou were described as resembling a giant anthill brutally disturbed by the hordes of German tanks, by the hundreds of thousands of German infantry who moved westwards with a force that nothing could stop. Berlin waxed jubilant over 200,000 prisoners. And everywhere the movements of the retreating Allies were hampered, and often paralysed,



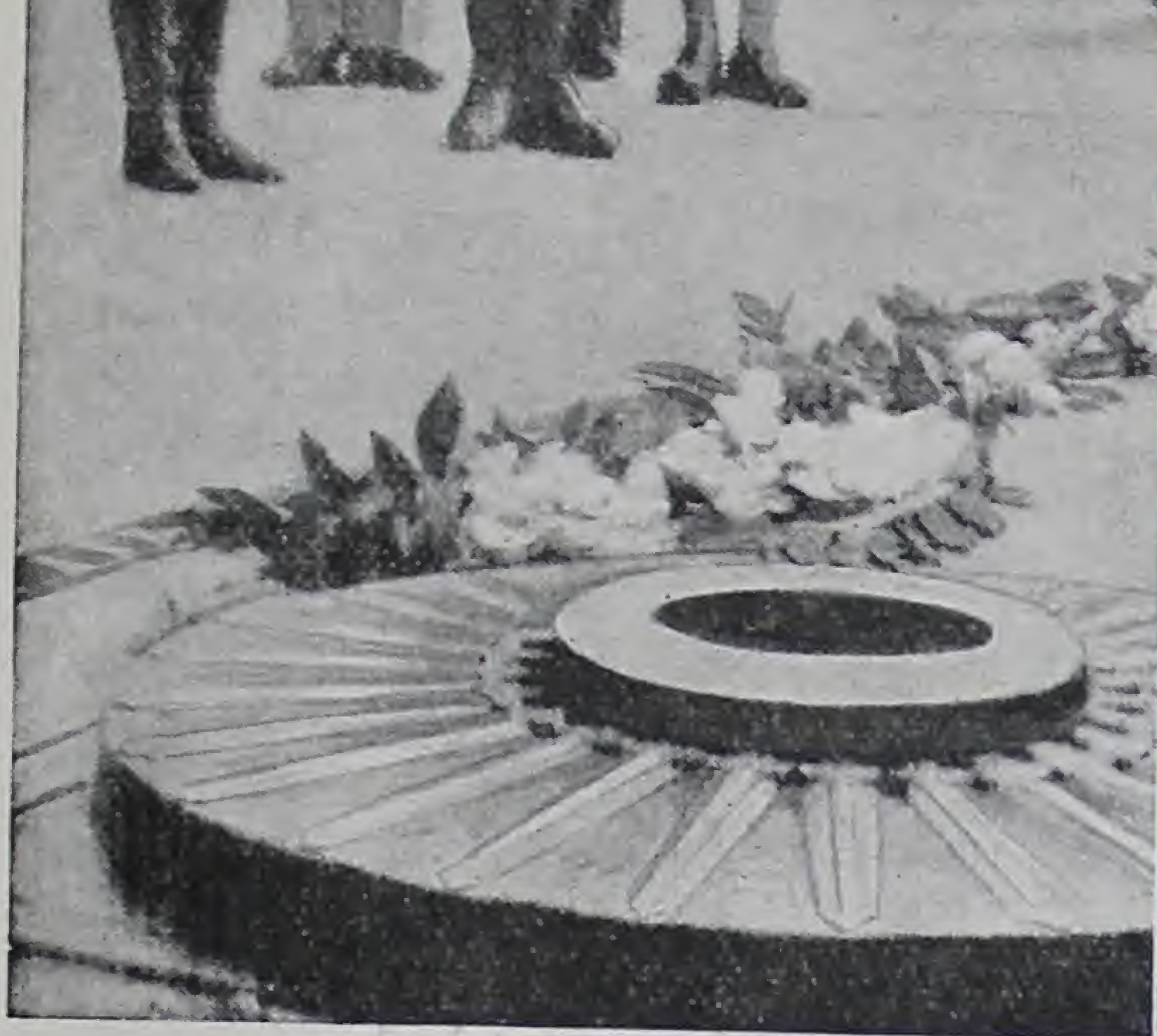
ANGLO-FRENCH RED CROSS UNIT IN WAR ZONE

Sharing the dangers of the French Army, of which it was officially recognized a unit, the Anglo-French Ambulance Corps experienced the full hazards of war during the retreat to Bordeaux. It was in Compiègne during the bombing, results of which are seen in the upper photograph. Immediately above, one of the Corps' ambulances is seen ditched by the side of a French road.

Photos, Miss D. M. Clarke, a member of the Corps

by the great flood of refugees who streamed along the roads and across the fields, impelled by the one overwhelming desire to escape from the approaching Nazis.

That Sunday, June 16, marked a decisive turn in the war. The position of the French armies was considered to be so desperate that the British Government transmitted to their French colleagues, now established in Bordeaux, draft proposals for an Act of Union between Great Britain and France. The proposal, so dramatic in its making, so vast in its implications, was considered by M. Reynaud's Cabinet, but it was finally rejected. A majority of the Cabinet had come to the conclusion that further fighting was futile. General Weygand could hold out no hopes of stopping the German advance, and the appeals to President Roosevelt had not been answered in the way that perhaps



FIRST GERMAN SOLDIERS IN PARIS

Above, Dietrich (left), Nazi press chief, and Boehmer, head of the foreign press dept., are saluting the memorial to France's Unknown Warrior. Top, right, German soldiers in one of the tree-lined avenues which radiate from the Place de l'Etoile. Centre, right, viewing Paris from the Eiffel Tower. Below, German cyclists pass by the Central Markets.

Photos, Keystone; Associated Press; E.N.A.; Wide World



was hoped. So Reynaud resigned, and in his place President Lebrun appointed Marshal Pétain, who at once decided to make overtures to the enemy for an armistice.

But while the approach to Hitler was being made through the Spanish Ambassador, Señor Lequerica, the war went on. The French communiqué

issued just before midnight on June 17 stated that the battle had continued throughout the day on the whole

front, and particularly along the Middle Loire. In several places enemy detachments had succeeded in crossing the river, while fighting was going on round Orléans, and Dijon had fallen. Continuous front there was none; in Central France the position was fluid in the extreme, but the guns of the Maginot Line were still in action, though the Germans were claiming that the ring around the French forces in Alsace-Lorraine had been completely closed and their motorized troops had reached the Swiss frontier at Pontarlier. In the

Alps the Italians, who reported on June 15 that they were about to attack Nice and Savoy, were little in evidence.

Broadcasting on the evening of June 17, Mr. Churchill admitted that "the news from France is very bad," and in the hours and days that followed there was nothing to lighten the gloom. By now the French army had been broken into pieces, large and small. The Germans claimed that their enemies were evidently at the point of dissolution. Though it was known that negotiations for an armistice were in progress there was no slackening of the



FRANCE IN SORRY FLIGHT

Top right, a photograph radio'd from Paris to New York showing French prisoners entering the Palace of Versailles after it had been taken over by the Nazis. Below, German motorcyclists are advancing through a shattered street in Orléans, once a beautiful French town, wrecked by the German bombardment.

Photos, Keystone; Associated Press

German drive, which had now become a pursuit. The German air force harried the retreating French columns; many of the bridges across the Loire were heavily bombed, and the troops which were crowded about them waiting to cross were bombed and machine-gunned. The Nazis admitted that in Lorraine the French were offering a stubborn resistance, but in spite of this the German attack in the direction of the Vosges was continuing its progress.

While the reply was being awaited from Germany to Marshal Pétain's application, a communiqué was broadcast on behalf of the French Government in Bordeaux explaining the military situation which made it necessary to sue for an armistice. The French navy, it was stated, was still intact, and the French air force remained powerful because the losses it had suffered had been made good through the efforts of the aeroplane factories. It was the position of the French land armies that had become untenable. These armies were now (June 18) divided into four distinct groups, separated one from another and all standing in danger of becoming surrounded or crushed. The western group, containing all that was left of the B.E.F., was fighting vigorously, and had made several counter-attacks. The central group was in the most serious situation, following the tremendous



from any and every port in north-west France, and across the Channel in England great preparations were on foot to resist the invader who, it was now realized, might make his attempt at any moment.

Still the negotiations for an armistice dragged out their weary length, and still the French armies continued to fight and bleed. From an official spokesman in Bordeaux came a statement of the position of affairs on the several zones of fighting. In the west, it was stated, the French forces under the command of General de la Laurencie and General Langlois were withdrawing partly into

Brittany and partly south of the Lower Loire, fighting rearguard actions as they went. The armies which were fighting round Paris under the orders of General Hering, General Frère, and General Touchon, gave battle again on the Middle Loire, and then, in accordance with orders, renewed their retreat to the south, in the hope of being able to establish themselves there in more favourable positions. In Champagne the armies, outflanked as they were on either side by the German armoured divisions, endeavoured to break through in the direction of Dijon.

In Lorraine the armies under the command of General Condé and General Bourret had formed their battalions into squares, and in face of attacks delivered without cease from east, north, and west, they were progressing steadily, step by step, from the west of the Vosges towards the south, in an effort to break through the encircling enemy. The army of Alsace, commanded by General Laure, was also carving a way through the enemy

A Bitter and Hard-fought Retreat

German drive to the west of Troyes and Dijon; between it and the troops of the Maginot Line, constituting the third group, was an immense gap originating from the loss of Château-Thierry. The divisions in the Maginot Line had been partly evacuated and were now being regrouped on another front. The fourth group was the Alpine army, and this was still intact, although its flank had been exposed by the German thrust through the Saône gap.

The Germans, for their part, continued to claim an amazing succession of victories. Not only had the Maginot Line south of Saarbruecken been penetrated, but the still defended sectors of the great system of fortifications were being attacked in the rear. "The fortress of Dijon fell without a struggle," they declared; "the fortress of Metz was surrendered to an advancing mobile detachment . . . Over 100,000 prisoners were brought in. The booty comprises the whole equipment of numerous French divisions and several fortresses." And in the north, too, the front was collapsing as the Germans penetrated ever more deeply into Normandy and Brittany; the fall of Cherbourg was announced on June 18, and among the other cities now in German hands were Dijon, Metz and Colmar. The remnants of the B.E.F. were being evacuated



RENDERED USELESS TO THE FOE

The French destroyed a vast amount of war material to prevent it falling into German hands. Lower photo shows a French gun rendered useless to the enemy save for scrap. Top, left, debris of French army cars and lorries deliberately fired before the German occupation.

Photos, Associated Press; Keystone



GAUL'S ANCIENT CAPITAL IN GERMAN HANDS

The ancient city of Lyons, famous as a centre of the silk industry and a large manufacturing town, was captured by the Germans on June 20, 1940. Nazis are seen here watering their horses at a fountain in a Lyons square.

Photo, E.N.A.

forces which strove to bar its path. Thus, it was asserted, although the armies were cut off from each other, each retained its cohesion and was conducting its retreat in accordance with orders. Fighting thus, day after day, without respite, against enemy forces superior to them in numbers and material, they had sustained great losses through enemy fire and through sheer fatigue, but their morale remained splendid, and they were putting up a most desperate resistance.

That resistance was acknowledged by the enemy, who, after claiming that, following the storming of a passage across the Maginot Line in several places, Mulhouse and Belfort, Nancy and Strasbourg had been taken, admitted that the enemy resistance in the Maginot Line on both sides of Thionville was still unsubdued.

During the next day, June 20, there was no great change in the situation. The Germans continued their advance from Nantes in the west to near Lyons in the east; they had also penetrated the Jura as far as the Swiss frontier. Across that frontier tens of thousands of French soldiers, together with a Polish division and a great host of civilians, were pouring. In and about the Maginot Line violent fighting was in progress, but the army in the Alps was still awaiting the great Italian offensive.

On June 20 the news of the fall of Lyons was given out by the French wireless, and the Germans claimed to have captured Brest, France's great naval base in Brittany. From Nantes to Tours, the Lower Loire had been crossed at several points; in Southern Lorraine the remnants of the French

Eastern Army were confined still closer in the Moselle area between Epinal and Toul, both of which were now in German hands, and in the Vosges. Thionville still held out, but in Burgundy the Nazis, advancing from Belfort and the Upper Rhine, had joined hands.

The Armistice was signed at 6.50 p.m. on June 22, but it was decreed that hostilities should not cease until six hours after the Italian Government had notified the German Government that a Franco-Italian armistice had also been concluded.

But before that could be, Mussolini must have his little war, his great victory. While the plenipotentiaries were discussing the terms of armistice in the forest glade at Compiègne, he gave the Mussolini's order to his troops to Little War attack. An Italian communiqué issued on June 24 stated that: "On the Alpine front from Mont Blanc to the sea our troops started a general attack on June 21. The formidable enemy defences built into the rock on the high mountains, the strong reactions on the part of the enemy, who was firmly decided to oppose our advance, and the bad atmospheric conditions did not check the advance of our troops, who scored notable successes everywhere. An Italian contingent managed to gain possession of certain fortifications, such as the fort of Chanaillet, near Briançon, and the fort of Razet, in the lower Roya valley. Entire Italian units reached the valley of the Isère, Arc, Guil, Ubaye, Tinée, and Vésubie, penetrating the enemy's fortified lines and threatening the whole enemy front. The advance of our troops proceeds along the entire front."

Such was the Italian version. The French was given in a communiqué issued on the evening of Sunday, June 23. "On the Alpine front," it read, "there has been a continuation of Italian attempts to progress. On the whole, we still hold our advance positions." A few hours later the French were still claiming that they had repulsed the Italians in front of their positions of resistance, and that nowhere had that line been broken.

The last French communiqué of the war, issued by G.H.Q. at Bordeaux on the night of June 24, sounded no note of disaster nor of collapse. "Slight progress was made by the Germans in the Charente region," it read, "where the enemy occupied Angoulême, and also in the Rhône valley, where he reached Aix-les-Bains and the banks of the Vorette. In the Alps, Italian attacks continued all day.

THEY LED FRENCH ARMIES IN THE BATTLE OF FRANCE

In this page are photographs of some of the French generals who took part in the Battle of France, which, after fierce fighting, ended in the capitulation of the French Army.

Photos, Wide World ; G.P.U. ; Keystone ; Associated Press



General Frère, who commanded the French 7th Army.



General Hering, Governor of Paris until June 13, when he assumed an army command.



General Touchon, who led the French 6th Army.



General de la Laurencie, commander of the 3rd Army Corps, with H.Q. at Rouen.



General Condé, who led one of the French armies in Lorraine.



General Langlois, once Military Governor of Metz, commanded an army in Brittany.

They were checked near the frontier by our advance posts except in the Maurienne district, where the enemy advanced a little farther than Lanslebourg [two or three miles within the French frontier], and in the coastal sector, where he occupied Mentone. Our positions of resistance are intact on the whole Alpine front."

The Franco-Italian Armistice was signed at 7.35 p.m., Italian summer time (6.35 p.m., British summer time), on the evening of June 24, and at 1.35 (12.35 a.m., B.S.T.) the next morning it came into force, simultaneously with the one already concluded between France and Germany. The French front had practically disintegrated: the Germans had captured La Rochelle and St. Nazaire and had occupied the Atlantic coast down to the Gironde estuary; south of Lyons they had got to Grenoble and Chambéry; they claimed to have occupied the area north of Poitiers. Many of the important Maginot fortresses had been taken and the capture of others would have been a matter of days. (See relief map in pages 970-971.)

The war had begun, in effect, on May 10, only 46 days before. Yet these 46 days had sufficed to bring to the ground the military power of France; and with her, involved in a catastrophe without parallel in modern times, were Belgium and Holland, not to mention Luxemburg.

Not the least amazing feature of the débâcle was the fact that the French casualties were on an almost insignificant scale, compared with those of 1914-18.

In the absence of official figures, we have the statement of General de Gaulle, who was Under-Secretary for War in M. Reynaud's Cabinet, that 60,000 French soldiers had been killed and perhaps 300,000 wounded; 350,000 prisoners were taken by the Nazis in Belgium and France in the first phase of the battle, and 600,000 later. The figures of prisoners taken would seem to have been an underestimate, for the Germans claimed that the total number of French prisoners amounted to 1,900,000 men, including five army commanders and about 29,000 officers, and this figure was not disputed by the Vichy

Government. (The Nazis also claimed that amongst the war material seized was "the entire equipment of 55 French divisions, not counting the armament and the equipment of the Maginot Line and other fortifications.")

The German casualties from May 10 to the Armistice—"so far as they can be ascertained"—were given in a report by the German High Command. According to this, the losses, which may be accepted with some reserve, were: killed, 27,074; missing, 18,384; wounded, 111,034—a total of 156,492.

Of the Allies, who so short a time before had made a bold front in the West against the Nazis, only one was left. To quote the German report again: "After this greatest victory in German history over an opponent who was regarded as the most powerful land



FRENCH PRISONERS OF WAR

Lower photo, a group of French soldiers, taken prisoner by the Nazis during the Battle of France, are marching away to captivity while a German 'plane flies overhead. In the upper photograph French soldiers are being searched by their German captors before being sent to a prisoners' camp.

Photos, Associated Press; E.N.A.

power in the world, who fought both skilfully and bravely, there are no longer Allies. Only one foe remains: England."

Before dawn on June 25 the "Cease Fire" had sounded and had been obeyed—but not everywhere. Still, for nearly a week more, little bands of gallant Frenchmen, cut off from the outside world in isolated sections of the Maginot Line, continued their desperate resistance against the Nazi hordes who assailed them from every side. At last General Huntziger, chief French delegate to the Armistice Commission meeting at Wiesbaden, was instructed on June 30 to make contact with the heroic defenders of these forts on which the French flag was still flying, and inform them that the Armistice had been signed a week before. Then, when the last of these forts had surrendered, the sound of firing ceased. The war on the Western Front had ended.



ITALY INVADES HELPLESS FRANCE

Entering the war when France had collapsed, Italy had very little fighting to do in that theatre of war. Our photographs show: above, damage from French artillery fire in the Italian frontier town of Ventimiglia; right, Italian infantry marching towards Mentône; below, the Italian flag flying over the captured French Alpine fort of Trevesette.

Photos, Keystone; E.N.A.



SUPREME EFFORTS FAIL TO AVERT DISASTER:

Despite Britain's assurances of every possible support, and her final dramatic proposal for a Franco-British Union; despite President Roosevelt's promise of ever-increasing material help, France could hold out no longer, and on June 17, 1940, Marshal Pétain, at the head of a newly-formed Government, appealed to Hitler to discuss "as between soldiers, and in honour, the means to end hostilities."

M. REYNAUD, PRIME MINISTER OF FRANCE, IN AN APPEAL TO PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT, JUNE 10, 1940:

DURING six days and six nights our divisions have been fighting without an hour of respite against an enemy disposing of a crushing superiority in men and material. The enemy has today nearly reached the gates of Paris. We shall fight in front of Paris, we shall fight behind Paris. We will shut ourselves into one of our provinces, and if we are driven out we will go to North Africa and, if necessary, into our possessions in America.

Part of the Government has already left Paris. I am myself preparing to go to the Army. This is to intensify the struggle with all the forces remaining and not to give up. May I ask you to explain all that to your people and to all citizens of the United States, telling them that we are resolved to sacrifice ourselves in the struggle we are carrying on for all free men?

At the hour in which I am addressing you another dictatorship has just struck France in the back. A naval war will start. You have generously answered the appeal I made to you several days ago across the Atlantic. Today, June 10, 1940, my duty is to ask you for even greater assistance. At the same time that you explain the situation to the men and women of America I beg you publicly to declare that the United States will accord the Allies their material support through all means, except the sending of an expeditionary corps. I beg you to do this before it is too late. I know the gravity of such a gesture. Its gravity itself necessitates that it should not come too late.

You told us yourself on Oct. 5, 1937: "I am compelled, as you are compelled, to look ahead. The peace, freedom and security of 90 per cent of the population of the world are being jeopardized by the remaining 10 per cent, who are threatening to break down all international order and law. In accordance with moral standards that have received almost universal acceptance through the centuries, they can and must find some way to make their will prevail."

The hour has now come for 90 per cent of the citizens of the world to unite against the mortal danger which is threatening us all. I have confidence in the solidarity of the American people in this vital struggle which the Allies are waging, not only for their own safety, but also for the safety of American democracy.

MR. CHURCHILL, PRIME MINISTER OF GREAT BRITAIN, IN A MESSAGE TO M. REYNAUD, JUNE 10:

THE maximum possible support is being given by British forces in the great battle which the French Armies are now conducting with such undaunted courage. All available means are being used to give help on land, sea and in the air. The R.A.F. has been continually engaged over the battle-fields; and within the last few days fresh British forces have landed in France to take their place with those already engaged in the common struggle, while further extensive reinforcements are being rapidly organized and will shortly be available.

M. REYNAUD, IN A BROADCAST APPEAL TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, JUNE 13:

AMID the misfortune which has befallen our country one thing above all must be said: at a moment when fate lies heavy upon us we must cry aloud to the world the heroism of our Army, of our soldiers and their leaders. I have seen men returning from the battle who had not slept for five days. These men had no doubts about the issue of the battle. They had no doubts about the fate of their country. The heroism of the armies of Dunkirk has been

exceeded in the battles which are taking place from the sea to the Argonne.

Our race does not allow itself to be beaten by invasion. It has seen so many of them in the course of the centuries. But it has always repulsed and dominated the invader. All that—the sufferings and the courage of France—the world must know. All free men must pay their debt to her. The hour has come. The French Army is the advance guard of the armies of democracy and has sacrificed itself. In losing this battle it has inflicted terrible blows on the common enemy. The aeroplanes lost, the tanks destroyed, the losses suffered, explain Germany's damaged morale, notwithstanding this victory. Wounded France has the right to turn now to the democracies and to say: "I have claims on you."

But it is one thing to approve and another to act. We know what place the ideal holds among the American people. I address a new and final appeal to the President of the United States. Each time that I have asked him to increase his help he has done so generously. But it is a question today of the future of France, of the very life of France. Our fight has been a painful one. In the common struggle the superiority of the British Air Force is asserting itself day by day. But clouds of aeroplanes must assist us. Forces must come from the other side of the Atlantic and crush the evil forces which dominate Europe. We have the right to hope that the day is approaching when we shall receive that help. We keep hope in our hearts.

We want France to keep a free Government. That is why we have left Paris. We could not allow Hitler to be able to say that there was in France only a puppet Government such as those which he had tried to set up almost everywhere.

Our people in the course of its history has perhaps faltered, but it has never abdicated. The French nation will know great sufferings. May it be worthy of the nation's past. May it be brotherly and close its ranks around the wounded Patrie. The day of resurrection will come.

BRITISH GOVERNMENT, IN A MESSAGE TO THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT, JUNE 13:

IN this solemn hour for the British and French nations and for the cause of freedom and democracy, to which they have avowed themselves, his Majesty's Government desire to pay to the Government of the French Republic the tribute which is due to the heroic fortitude and constancy of the French Armies in the battle against enormous odds.

Their effort is worthy of the most glorious traditions and has inflicted deep and long-lasting injury upon the enemy's strength. Great Britain will continue to give the utmost aid in her power. We take this opportunity of proclaiming the indissoluble union of our two peoples and our two empires. We cannot measure the various forms of tribulation which will fall upon our peoples in the near future. We are sure that the ordeal by fire will only fuse them together into one unconquerable whole.

We renew to the French Republic our pledge and resolve to continue the struggle at all costs in France, in this island, upon the oceans, and in the air, wherever it may lead us, using all our resources to the utmost limit and sharing together the burden of repairing the ravages of war.

We shall never turn from the conflict until France stands safe and erect in all her grandeur, until the wronged and enslaved States and peoples have been liberated, and until civilization is free from the nightmare of Nazism. That this day will dawn we are more sure than ever. It may dawn sooner than we now have the right to expect.

PÉTAIN TAKES POWER AND ASKS FOR PEACE

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT, IN A MESSAGE TO M. REYNAUD, JUNE 15 :

I AM sending you this reply to your message which I am sure you will realize has received the most earnest as well as the most friendly study on our part. First of all, let me reiterate the ever-increasing admiration with which the American people and their Government are viewing the resplendent courage with which the French armies are resisting the invaders on French soil.

I wish also to reiterate in the most emphatic terms that, making every possible effort under present conditions, the Government of the United States has made it possible for the Allied Armies to obtain during the weeks that have just passed aeroplanes, artillery, and munitions of many kinds, and that this Government, so long as the Allied Governments continue to resist, will redouble its efforts in this direction. I believe that it is possible to say that every week that goes by will see additional material on its way to the Allied nations.

In accordance with its policy not to recognize the results of conquest of territory acquired through military aggression, the Government of the United States will not consider as valid any attempts to infringe by force the independence and territorial integrity of France.

In these hours which are so heartrending for the French people and yourself I send you assurances of my utmost sympathy, and can further assure you that so long as the French people continue in the defence of their liberty, which constitutes the cause of popular institutions throughout the world, so long will they rest assured that material supplies will be sent to them from the United States in ever-increasing quantities and kinds. I know that you will understand that these statements carry with them no implication of military commitments. Only Congress can make such commitments.

DRAFT DECLARATION OF UNION COMMUNICATED TO THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT BY H.M. AMBASSADOR, SIR RONALD CAMPBELL, JUNE 16 :

AT this most fateful moment in the history of the modern world the Government of the United Kingdom and the French Republic make this declaration of indissoluble union and unyielding resolution in their common defence of justice and freedom against subjection to a system which reduces mankind to a life of robots and slaves.

The two Governments declare that France and Great Britain shall no longer be two nations, but one Franco-British Union. The constitution of the Union will provide for joint organs of defence, foreign, financial and economic policies. Every citizen of France will enjoy immediately citizenship of Great Britain, every British subject will become a citizen of France. Both countries will share responsibility for the repair of the devastation of war, wherever it occurs in their territories, and the resources of both shall be equally, and as one, applied to that purpose.

During the war there shall be a single war Cabinet, and all the forces of Britain and France, whether on land, sea, or in the air, will be placed under its direction. It will govern from wherever it best can. The two Parliaments will be formally associated.

The nations of the British Empire are already forming new armies. France will keep her available forces in the field, on the sea and in the air.

The Union appeals to the United States to fortify the economic resources of the Allies and to bring her powerful material aid to the common cause.

The Union will concentrate its whole energy against the power of the enemy no matter where the battle may be. And thus we shall conquer.

OFFICIAL FRENCH COMMUNIQUÉ ANNOUNCING CONSTITUTION OF NEW GOVERNMENT, JUNE 17 :

IN the present circumstances the Council of Ministers, on the proposal of M. Reynaud, has deemed that the Government of France should be entrusted to a high personality enjoying the unanimous respect of the nation. In consequence M. Reynaud offered to the President of

the Republic the resignation of the Cabinet. M. Albert Lebrun accepted the resignation, paying homage to the patriotism which dictated it, and appealed immediately to Marshal Pétain, who accepted the task of forming a new Cabinet. The President of the Republic has thanked Marshal Pétain, who, assuming the heaviest responsibility ever borne by a French statesman, has proved once again his total devotion to the Fatherland.

MARSHAL PÉTAIN, NEW FRENCH PREMIER, IN A BROADCAST TO THE NATION, JUNE 17 :

FRENCHMEN: At the request of President Lebrun, I assumed, as from today, the direction of the French Government, certain of the affection of our admirable Army, which is fighting with a heroism worthy of its wonderful military tradition against an enemy superior in number and armaments. Certain that by its wonderful resistance it has fulfilled its duty towards its Allies, certain of the support of the war veterans whom I had the honour to command, certain of the confidence of the whole people, I give myself to France to help her in her hour of misfortune. . . .

It is with a heavy heart that I say we must cease to fight. I appealed last night to the adversary in order to ask him whether he is ready to discuss with me, as between soldiers and in honour, the means to end hostilities.

Let all Frenchmen rally round the Government over which I preside during these difficult trials and affirm their whole faith in the destiny of their country.

M. BAUDOUIN, NEW FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER, IN A BROADCAST FROM BORDEAUX, JUNE 17 :

AT this hour in which the very existence of France is threatened, her Government, grouped round the glorious leader of its tradition and its soul, have shown the discipline and abnegation of the French people. More than at any moment of national history this common tie of suffering and of resolution ensures the maintenance of French nobility and pride. Whatever decisions may be taken by the Government they will be honourable decisions. There is not a Frenchman but is determined that in this extreme adversity France shall preserve her dignity, courage and faith in the future. It is because they are sure of the country's spirit of independence that the Government remain among you and have asked on what conditions the carnage of our sons might be stopped

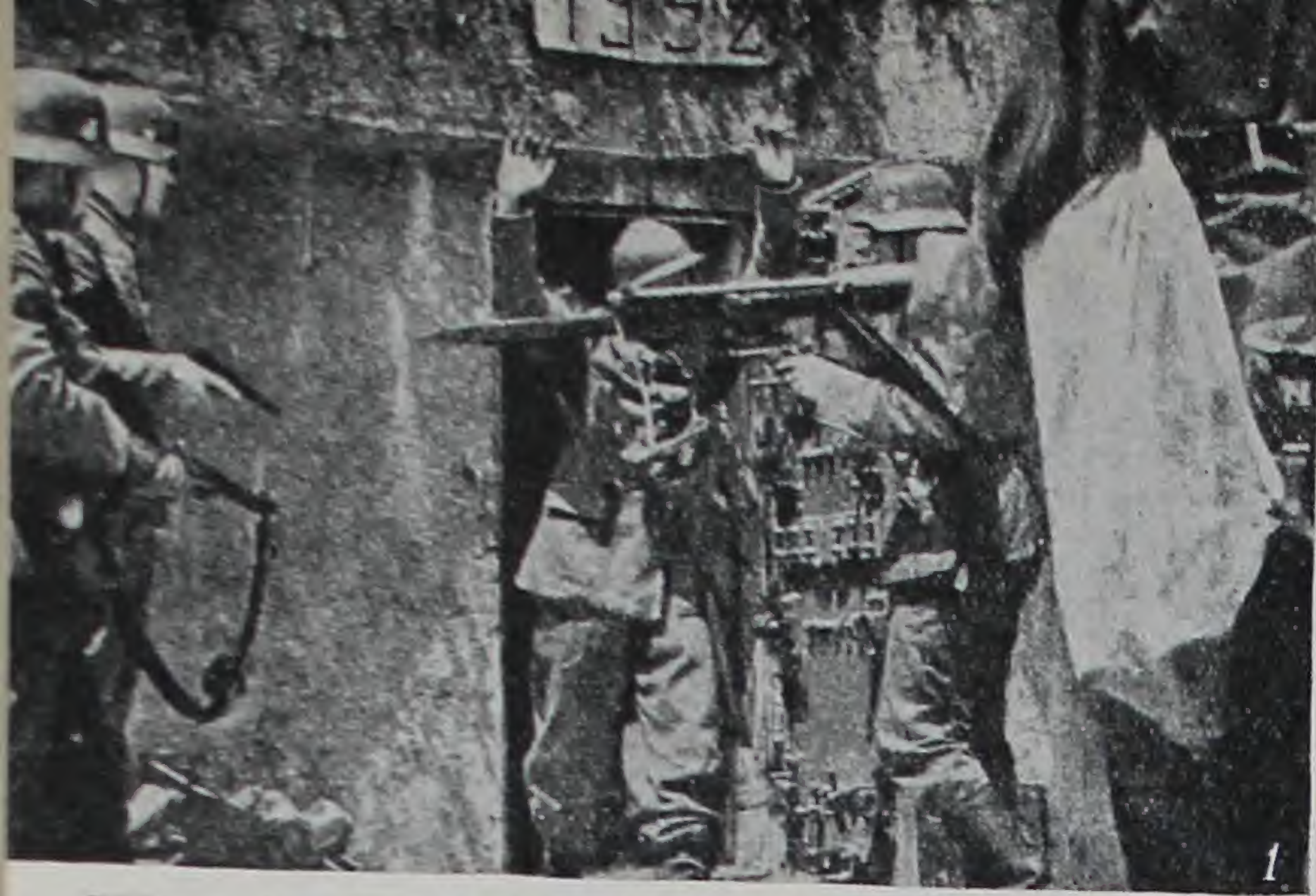
We have, it is true, received marks of sympathy. We have had the assistance of Great Britain, whose fleet, united to ours, has never lost the mastery of the seas, and whose troops and magnificent Air Force have shared our battles. We have also had the help of Poland, Holland and Belgium. But modern war cannot be improvised, and our friends have not been able to bring us the support necessary to the advance-guard which the French Army represented.

That is why the Pétain Government have had to ask for conditions of peace. But they have not abandoned their arms. The country is ready to seek, in honour, the way to put an end to hostilities. But it will never be ready to accept shameful conditions which would mean the end of spiritual freedom for her people. If the French are obliged to choose between existence and honour their choice is made, and by their total sacrifice it is the soul of France and all it represents for the world that they will have saved.

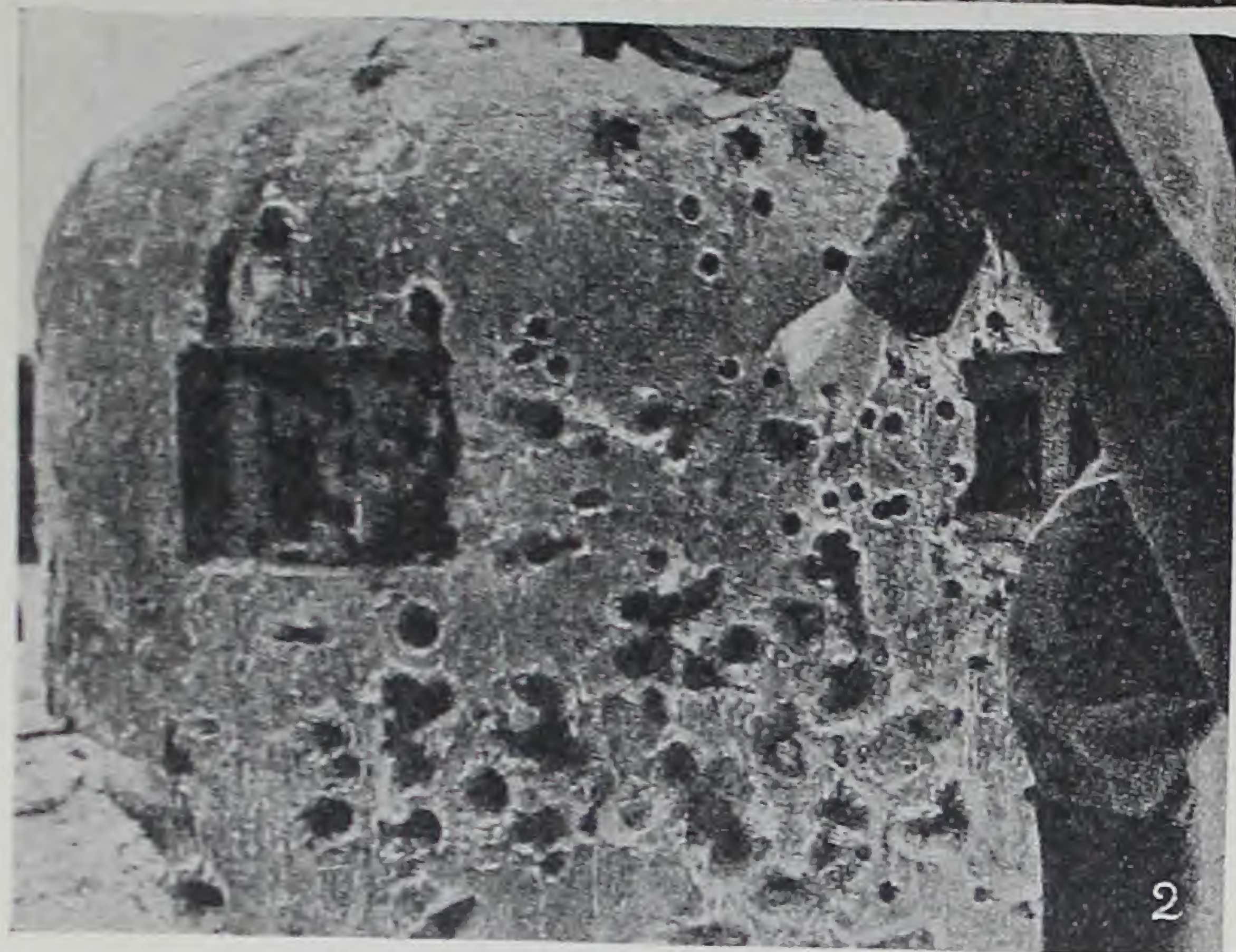
MR. CHURCHILL, IN A BROADCAST MESSAGE, JUNE 17 :

THE news from France is very bad, and I grieve for the gallant French people, who have fallen into this terrible misfortune. Nothing will alter our feelings towards them, or our faith that the genius of France will rise again. What has happened in France makes no difference to British faith and purpose.

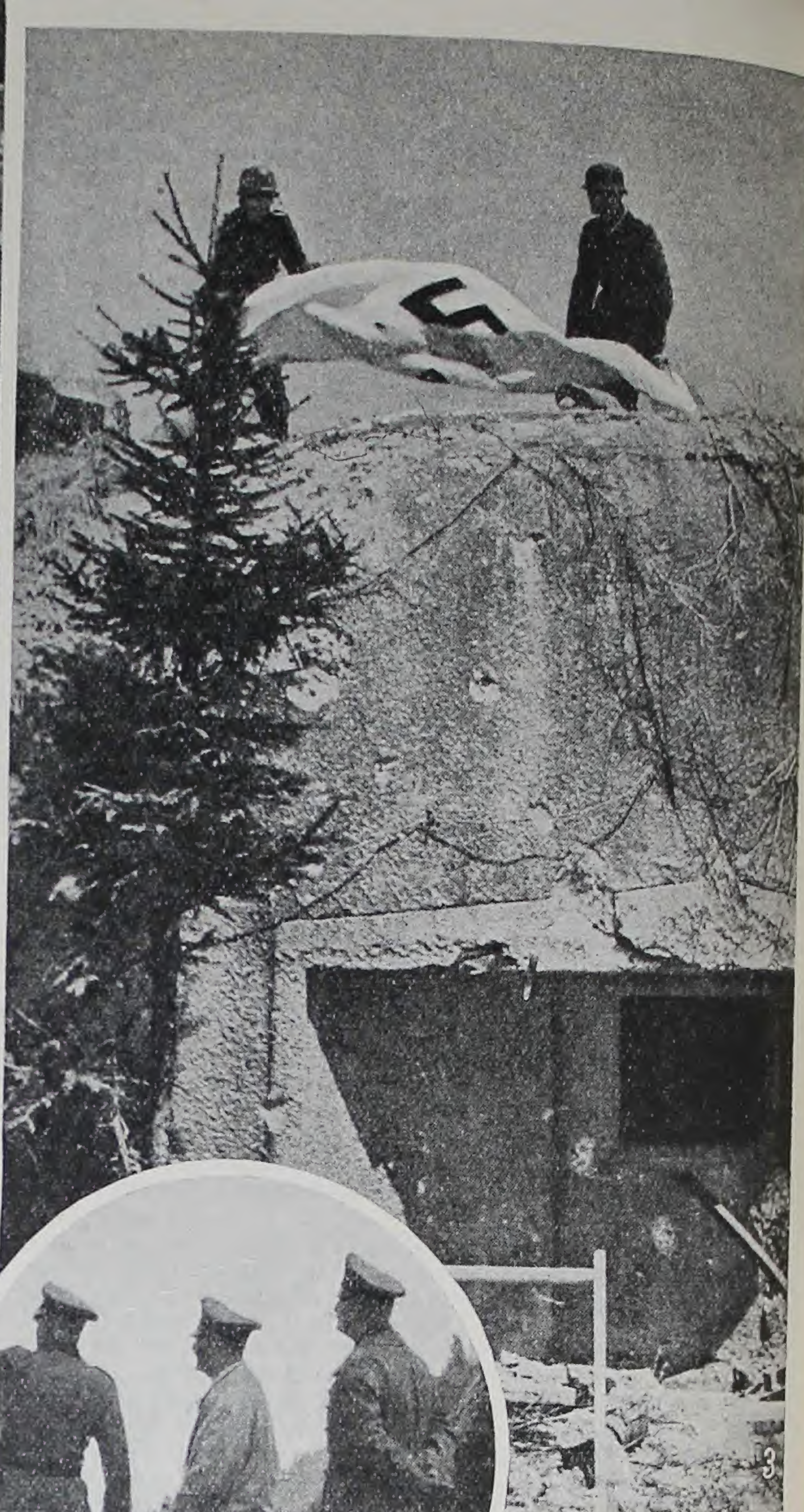
We have become the sole champions now in arms to defend the world cause. We shall do our best to be worthy of that high honour. We shall defend our island, and, with the British Empire around us, we shall fight on unconquerable until the curse of Hitler is lifted from the brows of men. We are sure that in the end all will be well.



1



2



3

END OF THE MAGINOT LINE

These photographs, from German sources, show : 1, French fortress troops surrendering ; 2, Anti-tank pill box, showing damage done by armour-piercing shells ; 3, Nazis laying out the swastika over one of the forts as a guide to aircraft ; 4, Hitler inspecting the Maginot Line (left to right, General Dollmann, the Fuehrer, General Keitel) ; 5, German soldiers cutting grass by one of the Maginot Line forts.

Photos, E.N.A.; Wide World



4



THE COLLAPSE OF FRANCE: SOME CONTRIBUTORY CAUSES OF THE TRAGEDY

The Great Tradition of France—Overrated Military Experts, Clinging to Outworn Theories—Unpreparedness of the Fighting Services—Responsibility of Pétain, Gamelin and Weygand—Unsavory Features of Political Life—Ideologies in Conflict—Sinister Traffic With the Axis—The Men of Vichy

WHY did France collapse?

None of the many explanations that have been advanced up to now by a host of French and foreign commentators can be accepted as wholly convincing or entirely satisfactory. The plain fact is that in face of a tragedy of such magnitude, and a problem of such complexity—involving not merely the defeat within a few brief weeks of a first-class military power, but the total collapse of a state which for over a thousand years had been the greatest glory of civilization—it is quite impossible to find a simple answer or to reduce it to a succinct formula. The French themselves, who are past masters at coining brilliant formulas, have failed so far to explain adequately the reasons for their country's undoing.

Let us look at the facts. Here was a country where one half of the population lived on the land (practically all of which it owned, and in small holdings, too) and was attached to the soil with almost animal passion; a country that had known the scourge of German invasion with tragic regularity in the whole course of its history, and three times within living memory; a country whose standard of intelligence and education was high enough to have enabled its people to realize that "il faut en finir," when more ignorant and indolent races were still hoping that one could avoid the issue by merely blinking it; a country, in short, where no illusion could have existed about the consequences of surrender.

Then, too, France was a country of great military tradition; with compulsory military service since days immemorial; with famous war colleges and other military and naval training centres; with a General Staff enjoying a unique reputation in the world. Had the disaster of May-June, 1940, been limited to a military defeat of first magnitude, even that would have been hard to comprehend. But that the French should have completely abandoned all attempts at prolonging the struggle against their hated Teutonic invaders—if necessary, in every village or city, in the colonies and dominions; that they should, more-

over, have accepted not only a shameful surrender but a series of lamentable and treasonable actions, committed in their name by a self-appointed and thoroughly unrepresentative Government, is something that defies understanding. It is this that causes all those who love and know France, and who tried desperately to understand her problems, complete bewilderment and the utmost pain.



THE 'TIGER'S' DISCIPLE

Secretary to Clemenceau during and after the war of 1914-18, M. Georges Mandel (above) at the time of France's collapse was Minister of Colonies. He was in favour of continuing the struggle against the Nazis.

Photo, Topical

While there is no single answer to the grim question, there is a series of considerations which, taken together, provide at least a part of that answer. First, there is the matter of military organization and leadership. The professional soldiers of France have always been profoundly critical of, and often opposed to, her Republican regime. They served the Third Republic while not really accepting it. At times they deliberately sabotaged it, and never more so than with the outbreak of this war. A certain number of the senior officers did not wish the Republic (for which they felt supreme contempt) to emerge

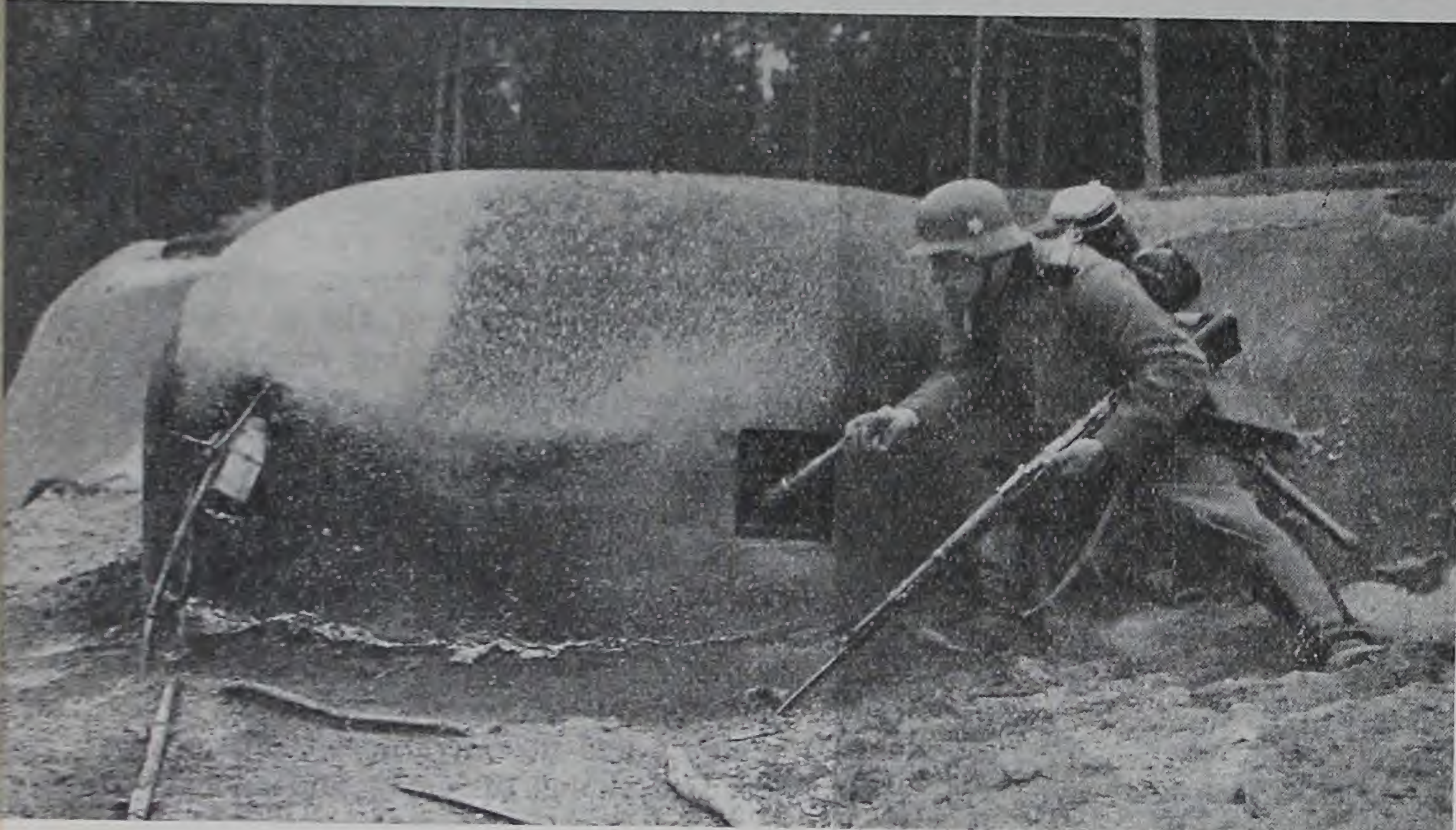
successfully from this, its second struggle against Germany during their lifetime. However misguided, there was a considerable number of generals and others who genuinely believed in "regeneration by suffering."

The much vaunted genius of the French General Staff, the scope and daring of its strategic and tactical conceptions, appear to have been grossly overrated. This flattering estimate was based entirely on memories of a glorious past and not on any present-day realities. Even in the war of 1914-18 the Allied leaders—the French, quite as much as the British—showed (with rare exceptions) incapacity for grasping the changed and progressively changing conditions of modern warfare. As regards the present struggle many of their conceptions were wrong from the start, and the offensive power of mechanized forces acting in cooperation with aircraft was under-estimated. In countries which had no aggressive designs public opinion deprecated as militarism the development of an offensive spirit or strategy, and defensive doctrines were preached, though seldom by professional soldiers. Such doctrines had their effect on political direction, and indirectly on military chiefs. The result certainly was confusion in strategical views and preparations, and many unfortunate compromises.

The Maginot Line has been said to represent the height of folly; but there was nothing wrong with the Line except that there was not enough of it, and that, having built it, the French military authorities proceeded to neglect everything else. Not the Maginot Line, which was turned, not effectively pierced, but "Maginitis" was to blame—the belief that the waging of this war required little effort and that it would somehow win itself. The Line served its purpose of allowing France to mobilize unmolested during the early months of the war, and it is open to speculation whether the Germans could ever have got through if, instead of stopping short where it did, it had extended along the whole Belgian frontier.

It is now admitted that the French, who alone among the leading nations

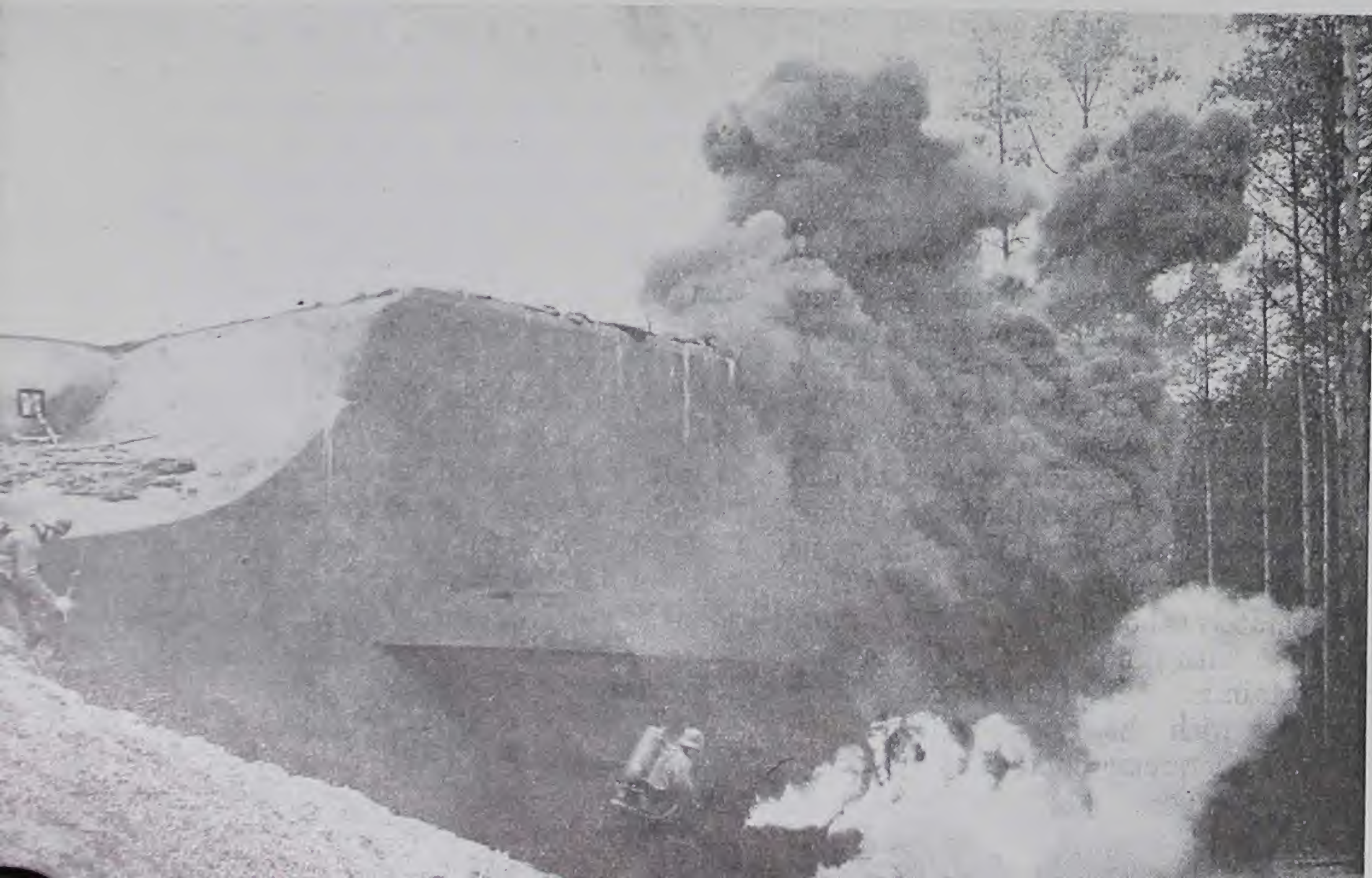
France's
Heritage



MAGINOT LINE ENCIRCLED

These Nazi propaganda photographs, staged after the event, purport to show how the forts of the Maginot Line were destroyed. In places the Maginot defences held out for a considerable time, but, outflanked and then taken in reverse, the defenders had no alternative but to surrender. Here forts are being attacked with flame-throwers and grenades.

Photos, E.N.A.



of Europe had not disarmed after 1920, entered this war in a state of utmost unpreparedness, though no hint of that state was permitted to reach the outside world. In 1870 the French Minister of War was reputed to have declared that his army was "ready to the last gaiter button," and then it turned out that it lacked a great deal. Something of a similar nature seems to have happened now. Where was all that mechanized equipment which, General Weygand told a British audience shortly before the war, had made such enormous progress between 1929 and 1939? Few tanks, few anti-aircraft guns, few lorries, an inadequate first-line air-force, and, according to some, not even enough uniforms. Where did all the money go—those milliards voted to national defence year after year by all French Governments, irrespective of their political colouring? For it is important to realize that, whatever the crimes or shortcomings of the French politicians, neither the Right nor the Left ever dared to interfere with the military authorities, who—but for a few insignificant cuts a couple of years before the war—invariably got all the financial appropriations they wanted.

Moreover, during the twenty years that separated the present war from the last one there was complete continuity in the supreme command and technical supervision of the French Armed Forces. Marshal Pétain of Three Men himself throughout that period was the "first military personage of France," with Weygand, then Gamelin, and finally once more Weygand, in active charge. These men, therefore, must accept the fullest share of responsibility for the defeat of their country and cannot get out of it by blaming it on the politicians.

In bringing about the collapse of France the politicians were as culpable as the military leaders, whose gross incapacity or deliberate sabotage hamstrung the army. In recent years the political personnel of the Third Republic was singularly ill chosen. It is wrong to attribute the misfortunes of France to "gerontocracy" [government by old men], for the post-war Governments, which succeeded each other so rapidly (under M. Lebrun's presidency alone there had been twenty cabinets in less than ten years), consisted mostly of men in the prime of life. And in the past it had fallen to one or two old men to serve their country well. Clemenceau, for example, won the war for the French when he was rising eighty; and Louis Barthou, their last great Foreign Minister, was well over seventy. But

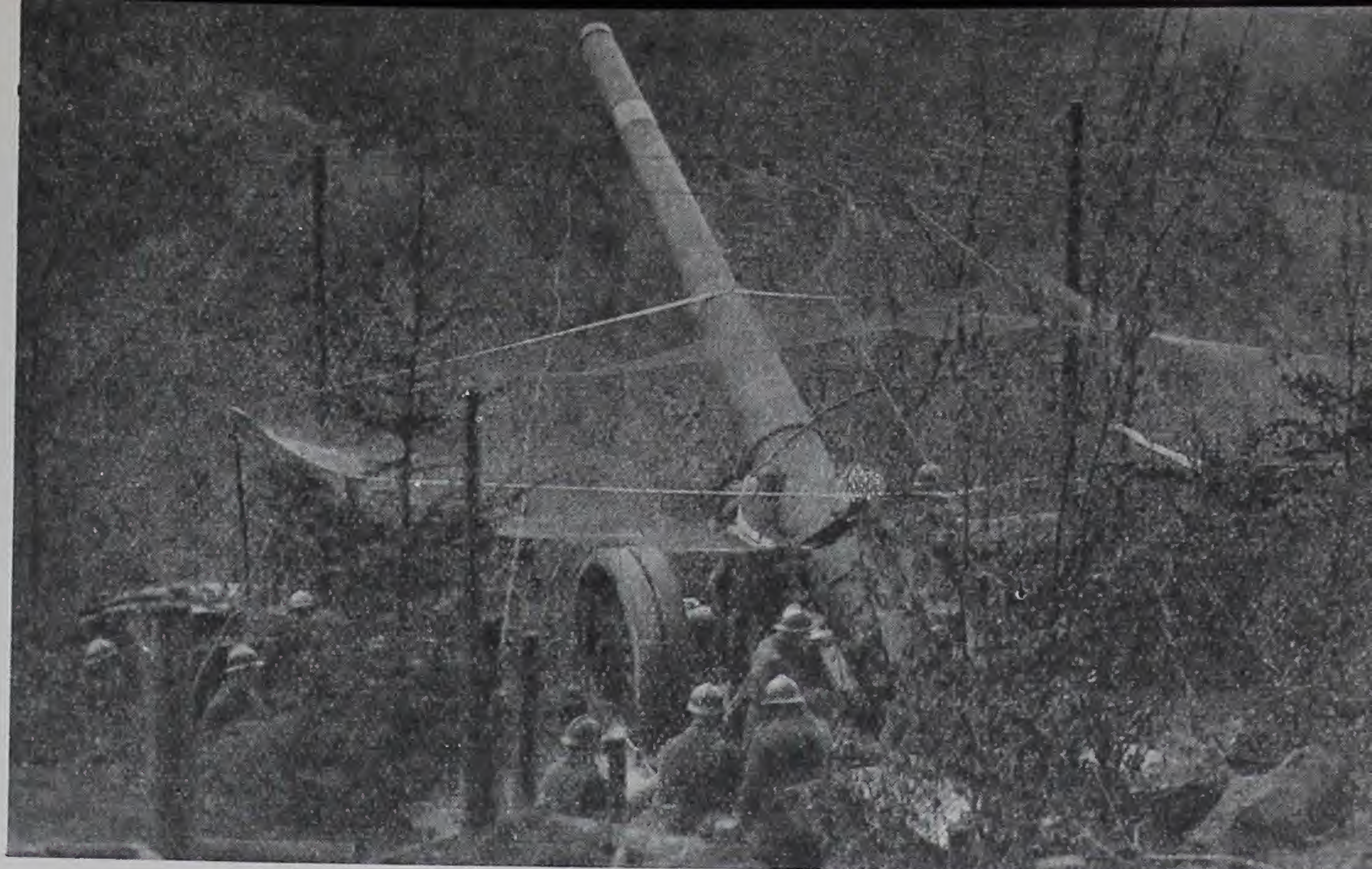
of late the political lawyers, among whom the majority of French cabinet ministers had invariably been recruited, seemed to have preferred their own vested interests or the interests of their clients—both French and foreign—to the interests of the state they were supposed to be serving.

The unsavoury characteristics of French political life are by now well known: Fifth Columnism at the top, treason and corruption, incompetence,

Corrupt disunity, unworthy
French pettiness, sexual laxity,
Political Life venality, obstructionism
and administrative
anarchy. Yet it is essential to realize that all these lamentable features were largely restricted to the big cities and did not touch the country as a whole. It is in the big cities that all the scourges of the "République des Camarades" flourished. It is there that the incessant struggle for power, honours and money went on unhampered by any consideration of patriotism or even ordinary human decency.

This is not to say that among the townspeople of France there were no honest, hardworking and profoundly loyal citizens. Of course, there were masses of them. But side by side with them there existed a whole series of separate and frequently intersecting worlds, and even underworlds, of their own which can only be described as the most unhealthy and abject manifestations of modern society. Politicians in and out of Parliament, municipal councillors, the civil service, the police, "big business," the press, the judiciary and even the Church took an active part in fostering and creating the process of decomposition which at last proved the ruin of France. In this poisoned and sinister political atmosphere of Paris and the big cities there was plenty of scope for every conceivable form of blackmail, vice and corruption and also for trafficking in treason on a hitherto unknown scale. With consummate adroitness the enemies of France availed themselves of every opportunity for originating or exploiting any sources of disintegration.

There was, further, a genuine and profound ideological conflict. For fifteen years the parties of the Left had been preaching pacifism in France and were trying to persuade the nation that the limits of accommodation with Germany must be sought for. During the last five years the parties of the Right preached defeatism with equal vehemence, and some of their leaders openly admitted that they preferred Hitler to the French Jew, Léon Blum.



FRANCE WAS LULLED IN FALSE SECURITY

Photos, French Official

Outstanding among the complex causes of France's collapse was the long period of inactivity behind strong defensive positions to which the Army was condemned prior to May, 1940. Top: one of the heavy guns which exchanged desultory shots with German batteries across the Rhine. Centre and bottom: infantry in the opening stages of the Battle of France.



Sinister political personages travelled between Paris, Rome and Berlin. There was Laval, who claimed to be on the best of terms with Mussolini. There was Flandin, who sent Hitler a telegram of congratulation. There was de Brinon, now appointed by the Vichy Government their "Ambassador" in Paris—a friend of Goering—who was continuously visiting Germany and then plotting against his more patriotic colleagues in the French Chamber of Deputies. Bonnet, the Foreign Minister, seemed ever ready for any act of moral turpitude as long as he could make money out of it, or gratify his political ambitions. Daladier, for nearly five years Minister of National Defence and most of that time also Prime Minister, seemed to make up for energy, clear thinking and courage by obstinacy, ambition and ill temper. Not a strong man, he tried to assume the pose of a dictator and failed to impress anybody. There were other influential politicians of all persuasions who were helping to paralyse or sell out the French nation during the years and months and weeks and days of decision; their name was legion.

Among these conscious and unconscious traitors, libertines, crooks and weaklings—on whom no judgement can be too severe—only a very few courageous, able, patriotic and efficient men stood out. First and foremost there was Georges Mandel—Clemenceau's worthy disciple. If there were any



SOCIALIST LEADER

M. Léon Blum, above, became the first Socialist Prime Minister in France in 1936, and introduced a number of social reforms which made him bitterly hated by the vested interests in France.

Photo, E.N.A.

doubt about his unique position the Vichy gang has offered the world a most convincing proof of it by making him their "scapegoat number one." They could not forgive him for being all the things that they could never be. There were one or two other good men besides Mandel, but they did not command

FRANCE'S POLITICAL INTRIGUERS

Left, M. Pierre Laval, the Auvergnat lawyer who after the collapse of France climbed back to power as Vice-Premier in the Vichy Government. Centre, M. Pierre Etienne Flandin, chief representative of the Right Wing policies in France. Right, M. Georges Bonnet, responsible for France's detachment from her obligations to Czechoslovakia.

Photos, E.N.A. ; Central Art Library



all his qualities. Dautry, the brilliant organizer; Reynaud, far-seeing, energetic, the best Finance Minister France had had for generations—a brilliant man whose undoing was the clique of perverts and eccentrics with which he allowed himself to be surrounded. In the Press there was "Pertinax," the famous diplomatic correspondent, who for years tried in vain to warn the nation. There were many patriotic and efficient civil servants, but on the whole only a small group, which was never given the chance of asserting itself.

As for the intellectual élite. In its individualism, carried to the extreme; in its mental snobbishness, which would not allow it to support plain bourgeois democracy, it turned either to the extreme Right or to the extreme Left. One half of these exceptionally able men were pro-Communist; the other half reactionaries. It was pitiful, and to the friends of France profoundly humiliating, to see writers of real talent whip out hackneyed political saws with the air of utmost self-satisfaction, or with an ostensibly purblind belief in the infallibility of their fads and nostrums.

So much for the cities. But the heart of France had always been in the villages, not in the cities. And in the villages millions of French men and women went on working extremely hard, remaining sound and loyal citizens—as they had always been. The men (from 18 to 50, be it noted) responded to the mobilization orders without a hitch. They would have fought and they would have died for France without a murmur, as their fathers and ancestors had done. They were never given a chance to do even that. For eight months they were



Photos, E.N.A

THEY WOULD NOT TRUCKLE TO NAZIS

Left, M. André Geraud, the famous French political writer well known under the pseudonym of "Pertinax." When France fell he went to America and his fortune was confiscated by the Vichy Government. Right, M. Raoul Dautry, French Minister of Armaments and formerly Chief Engineer of the Compagnie du Nord railway.

kept in demoralizing and dangerous inactivity. During those months a torrent of German propaganda was being directed at them, and nothing was done from the French and but little from the British side to counteract this poisonous form of modern German warfare.

To revert to the French peasants, turned soldiers after September, 1939. These millions of men cherished no aggressive ambitions. Nor had they

The Mind of the Peasants

any personal ill-feeling towards the Germans, whom they believed to be fundamentally

decent, if misguided, fellows like themselves. They would have attacked them had they been ordered to do so; but they were not. Meanwhile, whenever they went home on leave they were met with derision. "Is that your war?" people said, and intimated that life in the Maginot Line or in comfortable winter quarters was infinitely easier and more pleasurable than carrying on the work in the villages and in the factories. And there were the harvest, the vineyards, the cattle, and everything else to be looked after—labour which had now devolved on the women and old men. After eight months of "phony" war the French peasant soldier had only one desire—to return to his farm, to his family and to his work.

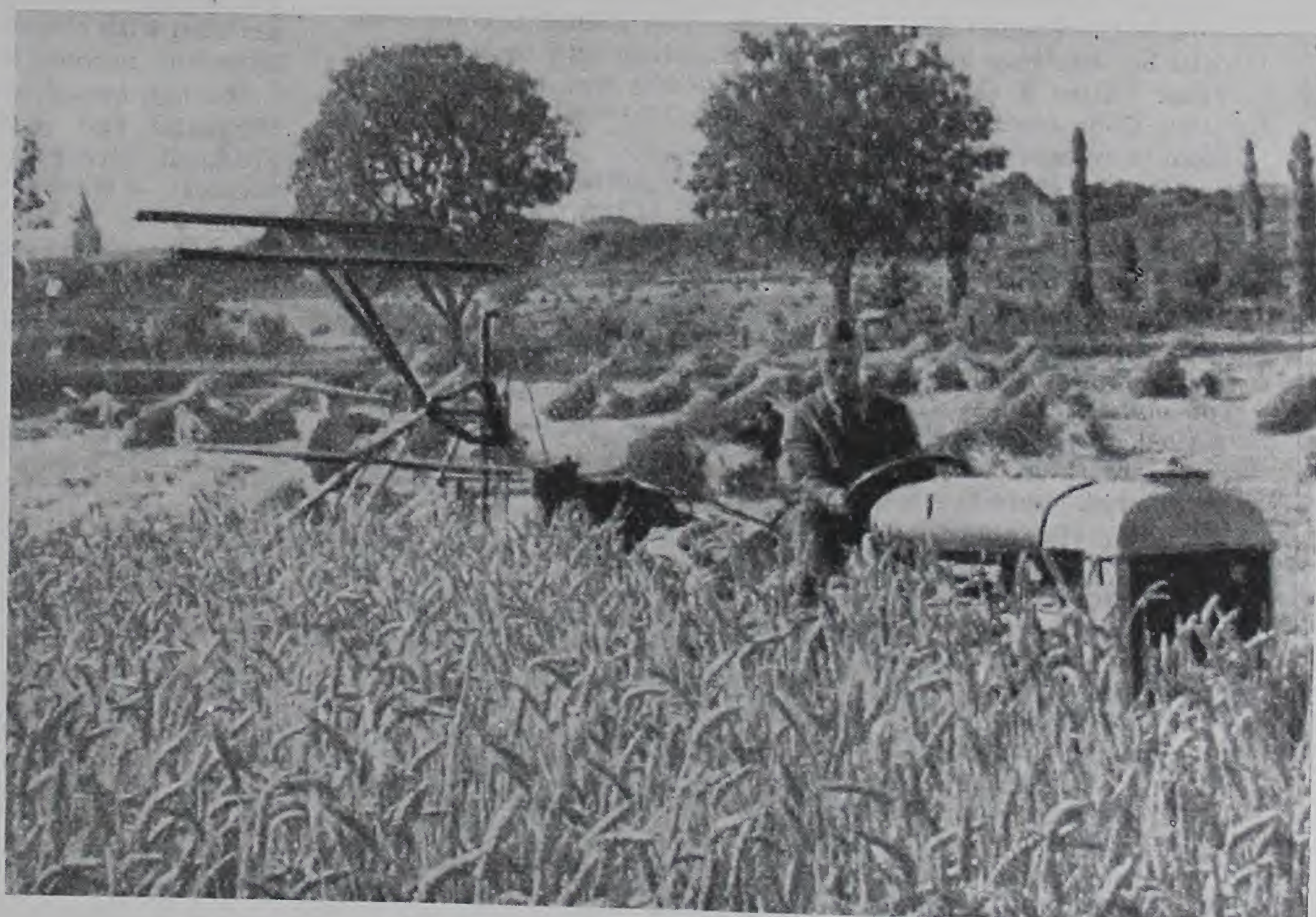
It sounds paradoxical, but it can be argued that if blood had been shed on an impressive scale from the very outset of hostilities this feeling of frustration would never have arisen. The sons of France would have defended their native soil as their fathers did in 1914 and their grandfathers in 1870.

As a mitigating circumstance in the faulty direction of the military leaders it is often advanced that the demographic factor was omnipresent in their minds. With so poor a birthrate, it is argued, the leaders were anxious not to squander French lives, and were justified in feeling that France could not afford to lose a couple of million men every twenty years. This argument, no doubt, had its influence, but it is not wholly convincing. After all, the trouble of France was not so much that her birthrate was low but that

infantile mortality was high. Moreover, was not the sacrifice of French life a lesser evil to choose than German domination—with all the calamities and humiliations that were bound to follow?

Yet, with men like Pétain, this argument must have weighed heavily when he sued for an armistice. Even during the war of 1914–18, though unquestionably a great soldier, he was notorious for his pessimism, while Pétain's reluctance to risk French lives resulted in many conflicts with Clemenceau, who had to push him along and pull him into action almost continuously. Now, at 84, the Marshal's ancient foibles had become something of a mania. The defeatists and traitors, who knew how to pander to his immeasurable vanity, exploited that lamentable old man to the full. They used him and Weygand—aged 73—to cover up with their military authority an operation of gigantic political fraud perpetrated on the French nation, which was deliberately kept in the utmost ignorance of the true facts and was stunned beyond belief when the blow fell.

The collapse of France, when everything is considered, was due primarily to the fact that all the forces of disruption, all the processes of decomposition, suddenly converged in one point. This gave a gang of malfeasant civilians and army men, who cared only for their personal and caste interests, a unique opportunity of committing wholesale treason and of perpetrating a crime unprecedented in history.



FROM FIGHTING TO FARMING

Here a French soldier, demobilized after the collapse of France, has returned to his farm and helps to get in the harvest. But the grain is more likely to go to Germany than to profit his own countrymen.

Photo, Wide World



A PANZER DIVISION ATTACKS IN FRANCE

The photographs in this page, which come from German official sources, show two phases in the advance of a German Panzer division (mechanized troops) during the Battle of France. Above, the start : an advance troop of infantry goes forward with the tanks. Below, the first wave of German tanks going into action in the direction of a wood.

A. Heavy tanks in the front line of the attack. B. Light tanks and trucks containing artillery. C. Motor-cyclists with sidecars. D. Anti-aircraft unit. E. Advance troop of infantry

Photos, Wide World



AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF FRANCE

Between June 17, when a newly-appointed French Government sued for the cessation of hostilities, and June 22, when Hitler made known his terms for an armistice, leaders in Britain and France tried to assign reasons for the great disaster. Here we reproduce part of a survey of the war situation made by Mr. Churchill in Parliament, and later broadcast; General de Gaulle's passionate protest against surrender; and Marshal Pétain's defeatist message to the French nation.

MR. CHURCHILL, IN A SPEECH IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, JUNE 18, 1940:

I SPOKE the other day of the colossal military disaster which occurred when the French High Command failed to withdraw the Northern Armies from Belgium at the moment when they knew that the French Front was decisively broken at Sedan and on the Meuse. This delay entailed the loss of fifteen or sixteen French Divisions and threatened the whole of the British Expeditionary Force.

Our Army and 120,000 French troops were, indeed, rescued by the British Navy from Dunkirk, but only with the loss of all their cannon, vehicles and modern equipment. This loss inevitably took some weeks to repair, and in the first two of those weeks the battle in France has been lost.

When we consider the heroic resistance made by the French Army at heavy odds in this battle and the enormous losses inflicted on the enemy, it may well be that those twenty-five divisions of the best trained and best equipped troops would have turned the scale. However, General Weygand had to fight without them. Only three British divisions or their equivalent were able to stand in the line with their French comrades. They have suffered severely, but they have fought well.

We sent every man we could to France as fast as we could re-equip and transport their formations. I am not reciting these facts for any purpose of recrimination. That I judge to be utterly futile and even harmful. We cannot afford it. I recite them in order to explain why it was that we did not have, as we could have had, between twelve and fourteen British divisions fighting in the line in this great battle instead of only three. I now put this aside on the shelf where future historians, when they have time, will find their documents. We have to think of the future and not of the past. . . .

We do not yet know what will happen in France, or whether French resistance will be prolonged both in France and in the French Empire oversea. The French Government will be throwing away great opportunities and casting away their future if they do not continue the war in accordance with their treaty obligations, from which we have not felt able to release them.

The House will have read the historic declaration in which, at the desire of many Frenchmen and of our own hearts, we have proclaimed our willingness to conclude, at the darkest hour of French history, a union of common citizenship. However matters may go in France, or with the French Government, or with another French Government, we in this island and in the British Empire will never lose our sense of comradeship with the French people. If we are now called upon to endure what they have suffered we shall emulate their courage and, if final victory rewards our toil, they shall share the gains, aye, and freedom shall be restored to all. We abate nothing of our just demands—Czechs, Poles, Norwegians, Dutch, Belgians, all who have joined their causes to our own, shall be restored.

What General Weygand called the "Battle of France" is over. I expect that the "Battle of Britain" is about to begin.

GENERAL DE GAULLE, IN A BROADCAST SPEECH FROM LONDON, JUNE 18, 1940:

THE generals who for many years have commanded the French armies have formed a Government. That Government, alleging that our armies have been defeated, has opened negotiations with the enemy to put an end to the fighting.

We certainly have been, and still are, submerged by the mechanical strength of the enemy, both on land and in the air. The tanks, the aeroplanes, the tactics of the Germans,

far more than their numbers, were responsible for our retirement. The tanks, the aeroplanes, the tactics of the Germans astounded our generals to such an extent that they have been brought to the pass which they are in today.

But has the last word been said? Has all hope disappeared? Is the defeat final? No. Believe me, I speak with knowledge and I tell you that France is not lost. The same methods which have brought about our defeat can quite well one day bring victory.

For France is not alone. She is not alone—she is not alone. She has a vast empire behind her. She can unite with the British Empire, which holds the seas and is continuing the struggle. She can utilize to the full, as England is doing, the vast industrial resources of the United States.

This war is not limited to the unhappy territory of our country. This war has not been decided by the Battle of France. This war is a world war. In spite of all our mistakes, all our deficiencies, all our sufferings, there are in the universe sufficient means to enable us one day to crush our enemies. Shattered today by mechanical force, we shall be able to conquer in the future by stronger mechanical force. The fate of the world depends on it.

I, General de Gaulle, now in London—I invite all French officers and men who are on British soil, or who may arrive here with or without their arms, I invite the engineers and the skilled workmen of the armament industries who are now on British soil, or who may arrive here, to get into touch with me. Whatever happens the flame of French resistance must not and shall not be extinguished.

MARSHAL PÉTAİN, FRENCH PRIME MINISTER, IN A BROADCAST ADDRESS, JUNE 20, 1940:

FRENCH people! I have asked the enemy to put an end to hostilities. The Government yesterday appointed plenipotentiaries to receive their conditions. I took this decision with the stout heart of a soldier because the military situation imposed it.

We had hoped to resist on the Somme-Aisne line. General Weygand had regrouped our forces, and his name alone presaged victory. The line yielded, however, under the pressure of the enemy and our troops were forced to retreat. From June 13 the request for an armistice was inevitable. The blow surprised you, and, remembering 1914-18, you sought the reasons for it. I am going to give you them.

On May 1, 1917, we still had 3,280,000 men under arms, in spite of three years of murderous fighting. On the eve of the present battle we had 500,000 fewer. In May, 1918, we had 85 British divisions; in May, 1940, we only had 10. In 1918 we had with us 58 Italian divisions and 42 American divisions.

The inferiority of our material was even greater than that of our effectives. French aviation has fought at odds of one to six. Not so strong as twenty-two years ago, we had also fewer friends, too few children, too few arms, too few allies. This is the cause of our defeat.

The French people do not deny the blow. All peoples have known ups and downs. It is by the way they react that they show themselves to be weak or great. We will learn a lesson from the battle which has been lost. Since victory the spirit of pleasure has prevailed over the spirit of sacrifice. People have demanded more than they have given, they have wanted to spare themselves effort. Today misfortune comes.

I was with you in the glorious days. As head of the Government I will remain with you in the dark days. Stand by me. The fight still goes on. It is for France, the soil of her sons.

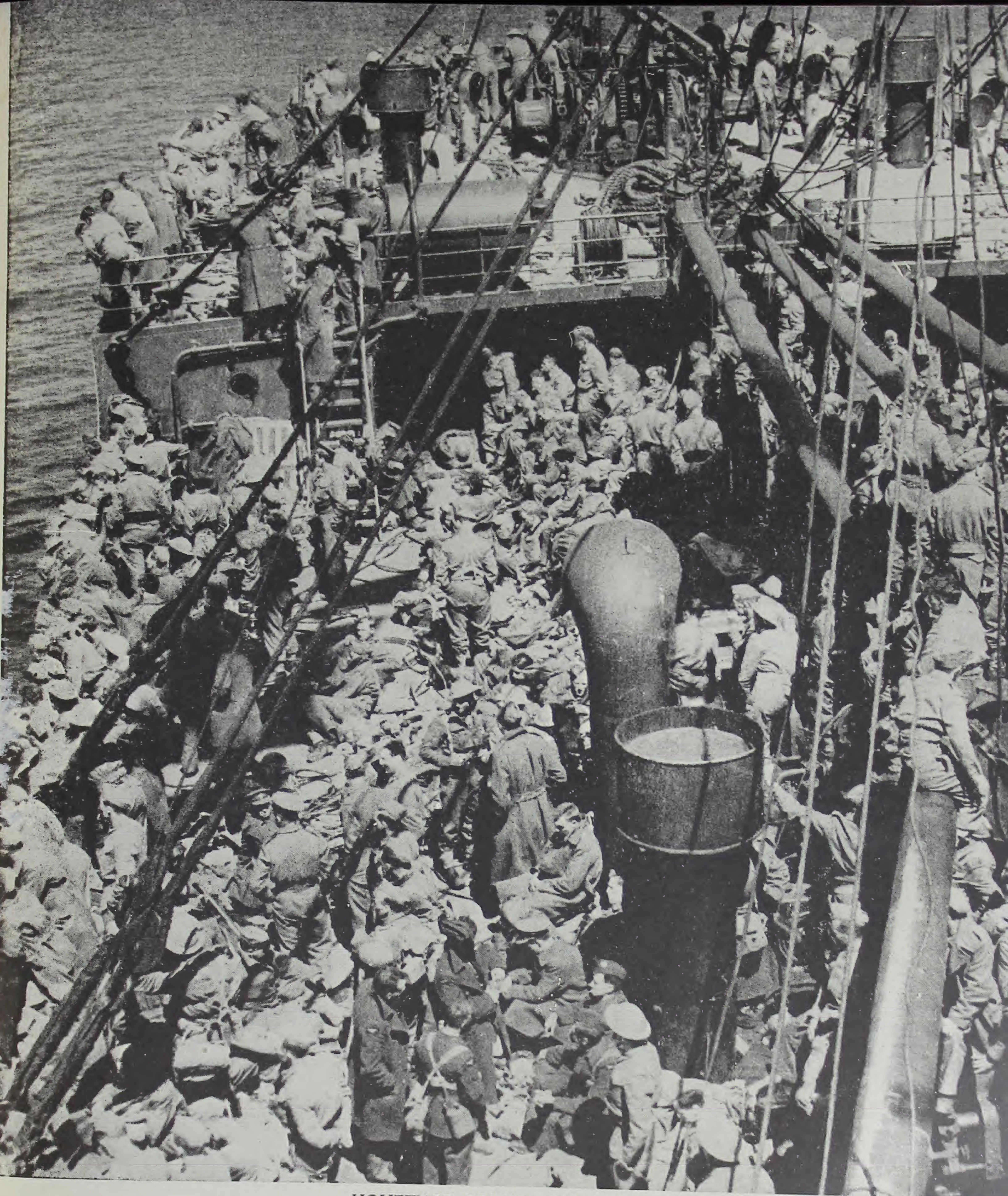


FLAMES ROB NAZIS OF PRIZED BOOTY

Here is one of the many lorries laden with British soldiers which in June, 1940, sped over the cobbled roads of France to the embarkation ports from which the B.E.F. was evacuated. Then came the heartbreaking job of destroying the lorries, some of which are seen below ablaze, near St. Nazaire, so that they should not fall, a useful prize, into the hands of the Nazis.

British Official : Crown Copyright





HOMeward BOUND: THE FINAL EVACUATION

After the swift drama of the Battle of France, which led to the fall of Paris on June 14, 1940, it was realized that further large-scale resistance was out of the question ; those units of the B.E.F. which were still left in France after the evacuation from Dunkirk began to make their way to the coast, where evacuation took place from ports not yet in German hands. Above are some of the B.E.F. on their way back to their homeland.

Photo, British Official : Crown Copyright



CHERBOURG'S LAST MOMENTS AS A WORKING PORT

Here, on the quayside at Cherbourg, are camouflaged lorries, seen as some of the last of the B.E.F. left France for England. As soon as the men and as much equipment as possible had been taken on board, and the vessels were clear, the long lines of quays at France's great transatlantic port were blown up. Demolition squads of the R.E., working in cooperation with the Navy, destroyed the harbour works and sent the great cranes toppling over into the sea.

Photo. British Official Crown Copyright

THE FINAL EVACUATION OF THE BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE FROM FRANCE

Perilous Position of the B.E.F. on the Allied Left—Withdrawal of the Advanced Air Striking Force—The Race to the Remaining Channel Ports—A Tank Division at Cherbourg—Scenes at Brest and St. Malo—Leaving Nothing Useful to the Enemy—Sinking of the 'Lancastria' at St. Nazaire

(The detailed story of the 51st (Highland) Division is told in Chapter 149)

WHEN the Germans crossed the Seine in overwhelming strength and pushed rapidly down the Channel coast and across the rich plains of Normandy, the position of the British forces on the extreme left of the Allied line became increasingly difficult, and, very shortly, precarious. The Weygand Zone was in dissolution; anything in the nature of a fixed line was no longer to be found. Everywhere the front was essentially fluid; day by day, hour by hour even, the tide of battle moved on. Here and there counter-attacks were delivered, but they did little or nothing to check the Nazis' progress. With irresistible force the invaders drove the British and French before them, until the whole of northern and north-western France was in their hands.

Not at first was it generally realized in the Allied camp that after the collapse of the positions on the Somme no further stand on a grand scale was possible,

**After the
Somme
Collapse**

although it was recognized that the French had been terribly tried in the Battle of the

Rivers, while as for the B.E.F., amazingly fortunate as it had been in its escape from Dunkirk, it could hardly be re-equipped in time to play a fresh part in the struggle. For a time there was talk, hope even, of a stand to the north-west of Paris, to the west, even to the south-west on the banks of the Loire, but the Loire hardly constitutes a formidable military obstacle, and in those weeks of summer it was a shallow stream enough. When Paris fell on June 14 the situation must have seemed well-nigh desperate. Already, indeed, the British units, military and air, had begun to make their way to the coast, where they expected to find the way of salvation opened before them.

Most of the original B.E.F. had taken part in the hurried march to Louvain and the even more hurried retreat to Dunkirk. The 51st (Highland) Division, which had been holding a sector of the Maginot Line, was heavily engaged in the Somme battles and, as we have seen (see page 954), was brought to bay at St. Valery, where all that were left of two of its three brigades were com-

pelled to surrender. The third brigade, which had been defending the Havre area, was safely evacuated to England. There remained a large number of units of various size and description—head-quarter troops, engineers and pioneers, signallers, men of the R.A.S.C. and the R.A.O.C., and so on—who were spread over the towns and villages of a great area in Northern France. Then there was also the Advanced Air Striking Force—squadrons of the R.A.F. who for weeks past had been in the air from dawn to dusk, defending the French infantry and guns from the attacks of the Nazi

bombers and affording them immense assistance in the way of destroying bridges, attacking columns of troops and overtaking and smashing the roving tanks.

One by one the squadrons of the A.A.S.F. were moved back from the front as the aerodromes which they had been occupying for months past were brought within range of the enemy's guns. New aerodromes were established farther back, but it was realized that these would be but temporary. Through the night convoys of lorries roared along the roads, taking back the stores and equipment, and the 'planes, too, were

SMOKE BLOTS OUT SKY AT LE HAVRE

Little of military importance was found in Le Havre, the great French seaport, when the Germans took possession of it on June 14, 1940, for German and, later, British aircraft had destroyed everything of military value. Below, huge columns of smoke are seen rising from the vicinity of the docks after a German air attack.

Photo, Keystone





smoking heaps and piles of shattered rubbish.

At Cherbourg a British tank division which had fought a gallant rearguard action on the Somme and then later on the Seine was got safely away on June 18. The scene was described by a French naval officer on his arrival in England. "They came rumbling into Cherbourg in the evening," he said. "Half the population had already left. Those who had resolved to stay were putting up their shutters and barri-

FRENCH HARBOURS ABLAZE

French sailors leaving Brest for England watch fires raging on shore as stores and munitions in the French naval base are blown up before the Germans arrive. Right, the harbour at St. Malo is seen after its destruction by British demolition parties. Brest and St. Malo were captured by the Germans between June 20 and 22, 1940.

Photos, Fox; "Daily Mirror"

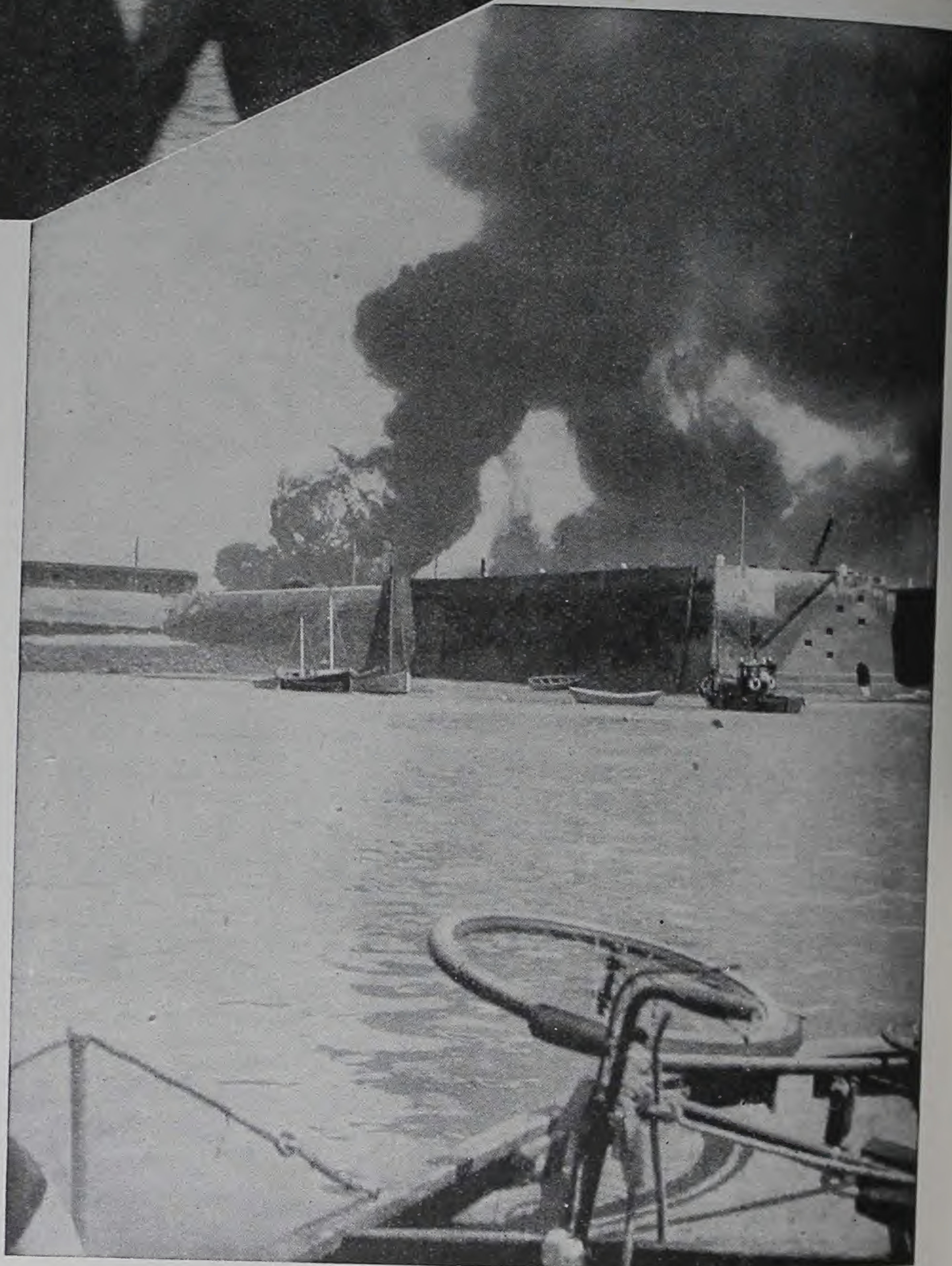
aiding in the ferry work. Up to the very last the fighters and bombers continued their offensive activity, until they received orders to make the final hop across the Channel to aerodromes at home.

As for the troops, they were collected so far as was possible under various commands. Then, fighting all the way, often against an enemy who appeared to be attacking from every side at once, they, too, gradually retreated to the coast. Most of them

Fighting a Way to the Coast

reached it; and most, too—the principal exceptions being the two brigades of the 51st Division mentioned above—were successfully embarked, just as the great mass of the B.E.F. had been a fortnight or so before. Throughout, it was a race with the encompassing Germans, whose armoured cars and tanks sped along the highways in the hope of cutting off the still obstinately resisting rearguards. As the days went by the difficulties of evacuation were increased, for port after port which had appeared as a haven of refuge was occupied by the Nazi hordes. Le Havre was the first to go, being entered by the Germans on June 14; Cherbourg was occupied on June 18, Brest on June 20, and St. Malo on June 22—so swift was the enemy's advance, so overwhelming the ubiquity of the pursuing columns.

At each port in turn large numbers of men, together with considerable quantities of war stores of every



description, were safely got on board the ships which the naval authorities had been able to collect. But in each port, too, far larger quantities of war material had to be abandoned to the enemy. Whenever possible, however, the tanks and lorries, the guns and ammunition, the foodstuffs and dumps of petrol and oil were smashed or fired, so that the enemy on his arrival should find nothing of value—nothing but

cading themselves in their houses. The Germans were only a few miles away. All along the quays there were British Marines drilling holes to lay dynamite. The big quay where passengers used to land from America was a weird sight. Hundreds of army vehicles stood wheel to wheel. Under this quayside were hundreds of sticks of dynamite.

"The first to be got aboard were the British tanks. An officer volunteered

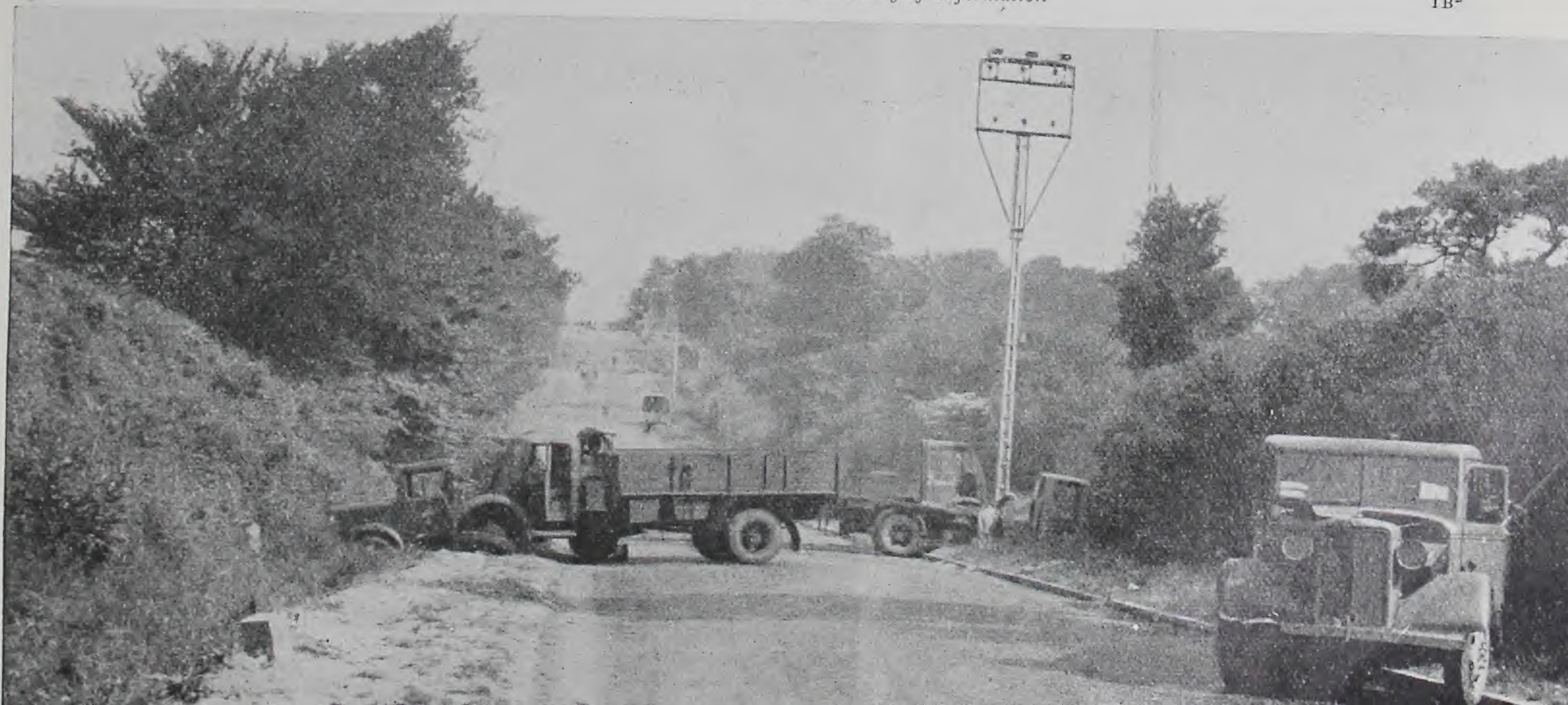


LAST HOURS OF THE B.E.F. AT CHERBOURG

The Germans occupied Cherbourg on June 18, 1940, after many of the B.E.F. had successfully got away. What equipment could not be embarked was destroyed to prevent it falling into enemy hands, and the top photograph shows motor transport burning in fields outside the town. In the centre photo, British troops are seen making their way to the quayside for evacuation. Below, abandoned lorries used as road blocks on the outskirts of Cherbourg.

Photos, Ministry of Information

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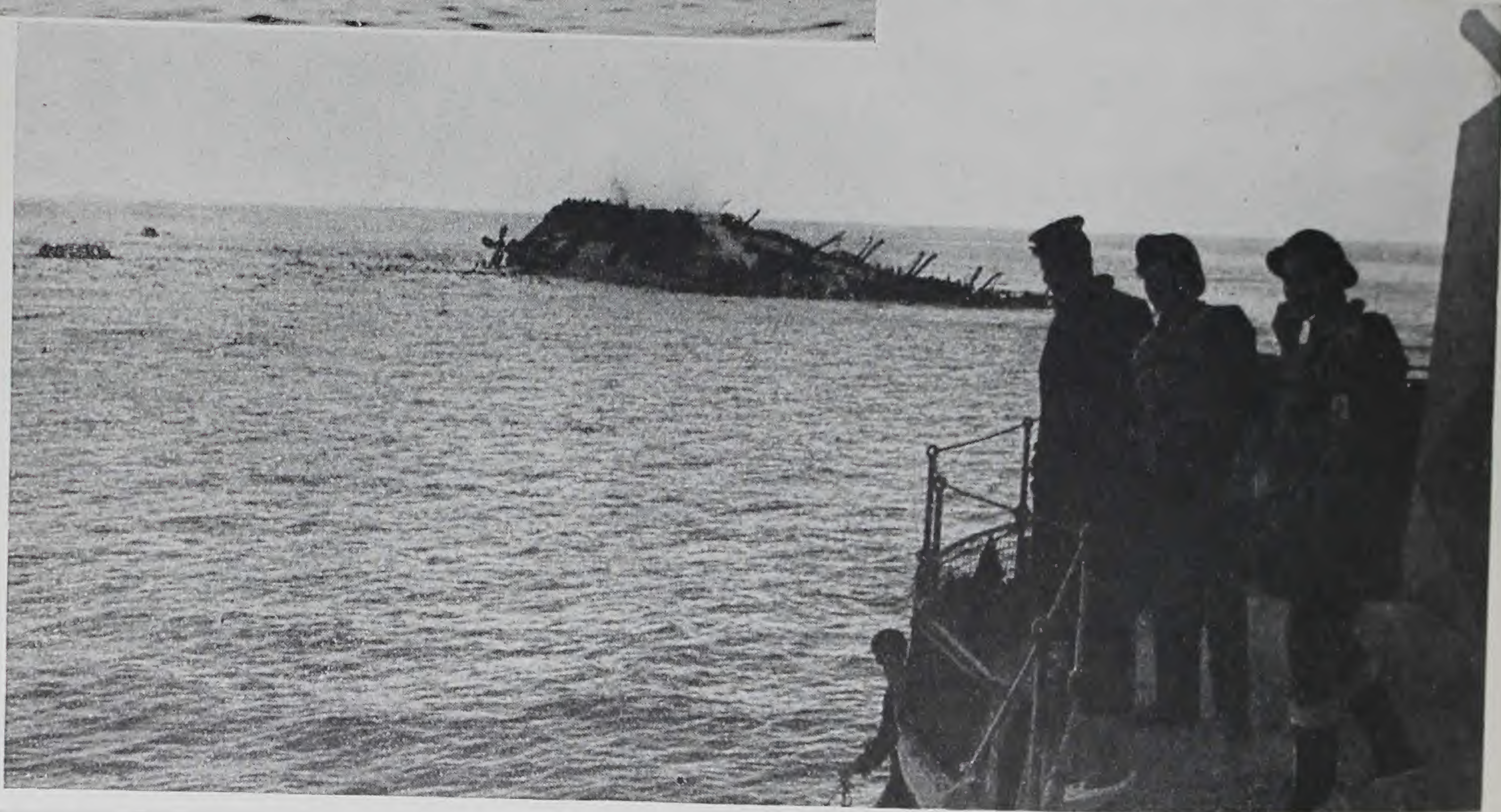




LOSS OF THE 'LANCASTRIA'

The Cunard liner 'Lancastria' (16,243 tons) was sunk by a formation of Junkers 87 dive-bombers off St. Nazaire on June 17, 1940. There were about 5,000 British troops on board, and more than 2,000 of them were lost. Our photographs show above, the 'Lancastria' in her cruise-liner days; left, settling down after the enemy attack; below, heeling over, her propellers above water; bottom, troops clustered on the hull and in the water. Many were rescued by the Royal Navy.

Photos, Associated Press





NAVY CONVOYS REFUGEES

The Canadian destroyer 'Fraser' is seen above off St. Jean de Luz, French watering-place near the Spanish border, accompanying small Basque fishing boats full of refugees who were embarked on the cargo boat 'Baron Nairn,' the last ship to take British subjects and allied refugees from the town. The destroyer was soon afterwards sunk in collision.

to take two small tanks out of the town to clear the roads of any Germans. When he got to the last barricade guarding the town, the French infantry holding it told him they were awaiting orders to evacuate and move south. The British tank officer said to them: 'Well, have a good look at these tanks, and don't fire when we come back, if you are still here.' The two tanks sailed through, and after patrolling a mile or two they turned back. Immediately they got to the barricade the officer opened the turret of the tank and waved his British tin helmet. Then he had to duck back as a machine-gun opened on him from the barricade.

"There was nothing for it but to fight, and after about fifteen minutes the tanks demolished the barricade and overcame the defenders. Anxious to find out why they had been attacked, the officer got down and examined the arms of the dead. They were all German, though the barricade defenders wore French uniforms. They were parachutists dropped overnight.

"When the two tanks arrived at the quayside the embarkation was almost complete. They had only just time to go on board themselves. Power had been cut off, and the cranes could not be used to lift the tanks on board. So they were sent crashing down the rocks to the sea. At twelve o'clock the last ship put out.

"I was on board," continued the naval officer whose story we quote. "The only craft in the harbour was a small motor-boat manned by British Marines, lying in the shelter of the breakwater, and waiting to touch a switch which would send the docks of Cherbourg, and all those motor-lorries

lined up on the quayside, sky-high. From two miles out at sea we saw the great port's end. The long line of quays lifted slowly into the air, then suddenly broke into segments, while hundreds of minor explosions broke out. Then a great column of smoke rose up over the port and hung



DESTRUCTION AT DIEPPE

The port of Dieppe, well known to British tourists, was raided by German aircraft during the Nazi advance into Normandy. Above is seen the wreckage resulting from an attack by German dive-bombers, which destroyed vessels at anchor and caused much damage to the port.

Photo, E.N.A.



BACK TO BRITAIN WITH SMILING FACES

Successfully evacuated from a port in north-western France, these men of the B.E.F. were glad to set foot again on English soil after their gruelling experiences in the Battle of France. One man leads a bull terrier which belonged to a subaltern of the Queen's Bays who did not return.

Photo, "Daily Mirror"

there like a black cloud in the sky as we headed for England."

Similar scenes were enacted at Brest, France's great Atlantic port. In its harbour were packed ships of every kind and size. As many as possible were got away to England, from merchant ships to the monster submarine "Surcouf." When they had gone, or while they were still leaving, volunteer demolition squads from the Royal Engineers, working in close cooperation with the Royal Navy, blew up the harbour works and sent the heavy cranes crashing into the docks. They did not leave until the place was a blazing ruin, and over all hung thick clouds of black smoke from the oil dumps which had also been fired. When the Nazis entered the town a few hours later they found that theirs was a hollow capture.

The port of St. Malo, too, was prac-

tically destroyed by British demolition parties. "I saw the total destruction of the harbour after all the British troops had been safely evacuated on June 18," said Mr. Le Marquand, owner of an auxiliary yacht, when he returned to a British port. "The Germans were then reported to be fast approaching, but the British naval officer in charge of the demolition party was amazingly cool. He would not allow his men to take any risks—he stood alone in the open to watch the destruction. Once, when four charges were ignited, it was doubtful whether all had exploded."

The men were definite that three had, but some of them wanted to venture into the danger zone to see what had happened to the fourth. The officer refused to allow them to leave cover. A few seconds later a deafening explosion from the fourth

charge hurled portions of the dock gates into the air. Amid all this the officer still took no cover, but stood alone while all the debris was flying about and dropping all around him. He seemed to have a charmed life."

Another eye-witness of the amazing spectacle was the Countess de Pret. "After all the scenes of panic in France," she said, "it was wonderful to see the calmness with which the British officers and soldiers carried out their duties at St. Malo. Although the Germans were within a few miles, the British made a thorough job of the demolition of the harbour. They blew up everything, and the harbour will be out of use for at least two years. We also learned that the British had made Cherbourg useless as a port and had destroyed the harbour works there."

But the most dramatic, the most heartrending scenes were witnessed at St. Nazaire, the port on the Bay of Biscay where men of the first B.E.F. landed in France in the autumn of 1914. In the harbour on June 17 was the great

Cunard White Star liner "Lancastria," which, with many other ships, was engaged in evacuating troops. Time after time the German bombers came over, and it was in one of the many raids that the "Lancastria" was hit. The ship had just been crammed with some 4,000—the exact number has never been ascertained—British soldiers, in addition to some 600 R.A.F. officers and men of the A.A.S.F., and a few British civilians who had held official positions in France. Most of the soldiers had come from Nantes, which had been designated an assembly point for the various units, and they had proceeded to St. Nazaire because this was practically the last port available for their evacuation. The embarkation was complete when a strong formation of Junkers 87 dive-bombers made their appearance, and three bombs hit the "Lancastria." Almost immediately the great ship heeled over and sank in about half an hour. Great numbers of the men—soldiers, airmen, and the ship's crew—were lost, whether killed by the explosion or by the 'planes' machine-guns, or drowned as they struggled in the water. It was feared that more than 2,000 lost their lives, and the casualties would have been even greater if warships of the Royal Navy had not swiftly come upon the scene and, amid cheers and cries of "The Navy's here," engaged forthwith in the work of rescue. Some 'planes of the R.A.F. also arrived and dropped lifebelts. Eventually some 2,500 survivors were landed at a West of England port.

"As soon as we were struck," said a member of the "Lancastria's" crew, "I pushed my way through the mass of soldiers towards one of the lifeboats.

Already it was full right up with men, and when 'Lancastria' I moved them the others all surged towards the boat hoping they would get a place aboard. Just then the 'Lancastria' gave a terrific lurch to port and all the men were thrown from one side of her to the other. I slid on my back down the deck, which was an enormous slant. I was flung into the sea, which can only be described as being one almost solid mass of men clinging together like flies and covered with thick black oil. Some of them were horribly burnt by the explosion, others were hanging on to debris, others were swimming until they finally sank; it was every man for himself. All this time the three aeroplanes were still above us and they continually swooped and bombed the oily waters and their machine-gunners

fired on the men struggling for their lives in the water."

One of the Army officers who was saved said that the 'planes were only 200 feet up when they first came over. "I thought they were British. Then the 'Lancastria' was hit. As she went down I waited until her deck was awash, then stepped into the sea. I still had on my tin hat. It was just as well, because when we were all in the water the 'planes still went on dropping bombs. As they hit the sea their force lifted us right out of it. The most dreadful thing was the cries of those who couldn't swim, and there weren't enough lifebelts to go round. You heard, 'Help me! I can't swim'—and you couldn't do anything. But the courage

shown was magnificent. Those who could swim sang as they swam."

So the last of the B.E.F. left France. They had landed in September only nine months before. But those nine months had been packed with events and experiences hard to rival in the world's history. They had endured a winter of boredom and of waiting, a spring of anticipation, and a summer of fiercest war. There had been the march to Louvain, the retreat to Dunkirk, the stand on the Seine, the surrender at St. Valery. All these lay behind the great clouds of smoke which, billowing up from the wrecked and debris-cluttered wharves, hid the coast of France from the eyes of those whom the ships bore away.



STILL FREE TO FIGHT

Among the Allied troops evacuated from north-western France were many Polish soldiers, who are shown above disembarking from one of the transports at a West Country port. Also on the vessel were civilian refugees, some of whom are seen still on board.

Photo, "News Chronicle"

RALLYING CALLS TO THE FRENCH NATION

Reactions to the humiliating terms of the Franco-German Armistice were typical of the sources from which they sprang. Mr. Churchill, sorrowful but resolute, appealed to all Frenchmen outside German clutches to aid in their country's liberation; General de Gaulle announced the formation of a French National Committee; Marshal Pétain could only exhort France to work and suffer with patience.

MR. CHURCHILL, IN AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT, JUNE 23, 1940 :

HIS Majesty's Government have heard with grief and amazement that the terms dictated by the Germans have been accepted by the French Government at Bordeaux. They cannot feel that such or similar terms could have been submitted to by any French Government which possessed freedom, independence and constitutional authority. Such terms, if accepted by all Frenchmen, would place not only France but the French Empire at the mercy and in the power of the German and Italian dictators. Not only would the French people be held down and forced to work against their Ally, not only would the soil of France be used with the approval of the Bordeaux Government as the means of attacking their Ally, but the whole resources of the French Empire and of the French Navy would speedily pass into the hands of the adversary for the fulfilment of his purpose.

His Majesty's Government firmly believe that whatever happens they will be able to carry the war, wherever it may lead, on the sea, in the air and upon land, to a successful conclusion. When Great Britain is victorious she will, in spite of the action of the Bordeaux Government, cherish the cause of the French people, and a British victory is the only possible hope for the restoration of the greatness of France and the freedom of its people.

Brave men from other countries overrun by Nazi invasion are steadfastly fighting in the ranks of freedom. Accordingly His Majesty's Government call upon all Frenchmen outside the power of the enemy to aid them in their task and thereby render its accomplishment more sure and more swift. They appeal to all Frenchmen, wherever they may be, to aid to the utmost of their strength the forces of liberation, which are enormous and which, if faithfully and resolutely used, will assuredly prevail.

MARSHAL PÉTAİN, IN A BROADCAST ADDRESS, JUNE 23 :

THE French Government and people heard the statement of Mr. Churchill with grief and amazement. We can understand the anguish that prompted it. Mr. Churchill fears that the fate that has fallen upon our country during the past month may overtake his own. Mr. Churchill is a good judge of the interest of his country, but not of ours, and still less of French honour. Our flag remains unstained. Our Army has fought loyally. Inferior in armaments and in numbers, it had to ask for a cessation of the fighting. It did so, I affirm, in independence and in dignity. No one will succeed in dividing Frenchmen in the hour when their country is suffering. France has spared neither her efforts nor her blood. She feels that she has earned the respect of the world. . . .

GENERAL DE GAULLE, FORMER FRENCH UNDER-SECRETARY FOR WAR, IN A BROADCAST FROM LONDON, JUNE 23 :

THE Armistice accepted by the Bordeaux Government is a capitulation. This capitulation was signed before all means of resistance had been exhausted. This capitulation delivers into the hands of the enemy, who will use them against our Allies, our arms, our aeroplanes, our warships, our gold. This capitulation utterly reduces France and places the Government of Bordeaux in immediate and direct dependence on the Germans and Italians.

There is no longer on the soil of France itself an independent government capable of upholding the interests of France, and the French are no longer in a position to function freely, and the people of France have at the moment no opportunity of expressing their true will.

Consequently, and owing to force majeure, a French National Committee will be formed in agreement with the British Government representing the interests of the country

and the people, and resolved to maintain the independence of France, to honour the alliances to which she is committed, and to contribute to the war efforts of the Allies until the final victory. . . .

The war is not lost, the country is not dead, hope is not extinct. Vive la France !

MR. CHURCHILL, IN A SPEECH IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, JUNE 25 :

THE House will feel profound sorrow at the fate of the great French nation and people, with whom we have been joined so long in war and peace and whom we have regarded as trustees with ourselves for the progress of a liberal culture and tolerant civilization in Europe.

There is no use or advantage in wasting strength and time upon hard words and reproaches. We hope that life and power will be given to us to rescue France from the ruin and bondage into which she has been cast by the might and fury of the enemy. We hope, however, that the French Empire, stretching all over the world and still protected by sea power, will continue the struggle at the side of its Allies. We hope that it may become the seat of a Government which will strive steadfastly for victory and will organize armies of liberation. These are matters which Frenchmen alone can decide.

We find it difficult to believe that the interests of France and the spirit of France will find no other expression than in the melancholy decisions which have been taken by the Government of Bordeaux. We shall certainly aid to the best of our ability and resources any Movement of Frenchmen outside the power of the enemy to work for the defeat of Nazi German barbarism and for the freedom and restoration of France. . . .

We do not know whether we shall be able to have any British representative in the restricted region called "Un-occupied France," because that is entirely surrounded by and under the control of the enemy. But, relying upon the true genius of the French people and their judgement of what has happened to them when they are allowed to know the facts, we shall endeavour to keep such contacts as are possible through the bars of their prison.

MARSHAL PÉTAİN, IN A BROADCAST ADDRESS TO THE FRENCH NATION, JUNE 25 :

FIRST we must stress the fact that France and her Allies had great illusions about their material strength and the importance of the blockade and wealth in raw materials. To achieve victory men and materials are necessary. Events showed that, in this respect, Germany had an overwhelming superiority, against which we could only oppose words and speeches. . . .

The Government were forced to choose between remaining where they were or going oversea. They decided to remain in France in order to preserve the unity of the French people and to represent it in face of the adversary. They were of the opinion that it was their duty to assure an acceptable armistice by making an appeal to the honour and reason of the opponent. I was ready to continue the fight, but then—should we prolong it in the colonies? I could not agree to the continued shedding of French blood. The conditions of the Armistice safeguard the ties which unite the metropolis with the colonies.

France must give more thought to her future than to anything else. All her efforts must be to organize peace. A new order of things begins. You will soon return to your homes. Some of you will have to reconstruct them. You have suffered, and you will still suffer. But with a strong will we shall reconstruct. The land remains, and that is the Fatherland itself.

THE FRENCH ARMISTICE: EVENTS DURING JUNE, 1940

Reactions to the German Offensive of June 5—Reynaud Reconstructs His Cabinet—Italy Declares War—British Ministers Hurry to Tours for Consultations—Paris in German Hands—‘Final Appeal’ to Roosevelt—Whisperings of Surrender—British Anxiety About French Fleet—The ‘Declaration of Union’—Fall of Reynaud: Pétain’s Government Sues for Peace—Dregs of Bitterness at Compiègne: Dictators’ Terms—The Farce Enacted at Rome

AT the opening of the battle which was so shortly to decide her fate, France—and particularly Paris, which has been mistaken so often for France—presented quite a brave appearance to the world. Even after the disaster on the Meuse and the collapse in Flanders the French army was still several millions strong; the fighting spirit of the men was said to be unimpaired, and the massive line of fortifications in the east remained intact. So, too, was the French Fleet, while the Air Force was still formidable. True, those whose ears were attuned to the subterranean mutterings of the political world suspected that the censorship, so strictly applied, hid a multitude of defects and deficiencies, but Reynaud seemed firm enough in the saddle and as yet there was never a suggestion of surrender. The situation was serious; some permitted themselves to say that it was desperate. But M. Reynaud expressed himself in a spirit of con-

fidence. He gave to the Military Mission of the Chamber on June 5 “reasons for hoping for a favourable outcome of the battle,” and after paying tribute to the heroism of the French troops and the high morale of the nation, declared that France was “resolved more than ever to fight to the end with its allies for the liberty of the world.” France’s façade, then, was still solid with hardly a crack to be seen. But soon the cracks were to develop into fissures, and in an amazingly brief space the whole structure came tumbling down.

Shortly before daybreak on June 5 the Germans launched their great offensive, which had for its prime objectives the capture of Paris and the Channel Ports. Over a front of more than a hundred miles the battle raged throughout the day, and General

Weygand’s new defence line, or rather zone, was severely tried. The French official spokesman avowed that night that “the general impression is good,” but all the same M. Reynaud decided that the situation was so critical that he was justified in thrusting diplomatic formality on one side and appealing direct to President Roosevelt for more aeroplanes to be supplied at once to the French Air Force.

Just before midnight the Cabinet met at the Elysée, and the long-simmering dissatisfaction of some of its members came to a head. When the Ministers dispersed, the Premier reconstituted his team, finally dropping M. Daladier and three of the ex-Premier’s associates. In their place he admitted several newcomers, of whom the most important were General

PARIS MEETING OF WAR COUNCIL

A meeting of the Supreme War Council was held in Paris on May 31, 1940. Below, on the steps of the French War Ministry, are seen, from left to right: Mr. Winston Churchill, General Sir J. Dill, Sir Ronald Campbell (British Ambassador to France), Mr. Attlee and M. Paul Reynaud.

Photo, Associated Press





SERVICE OF INTERCESSION

During the battles on the Western Front a special service was held in the Paris Cathedral of Notre-Dame to pray for the victory of the Allied armies. Here, at the ceremony, are seen MM. Reynaud (left) and Daladier. Behind stands M. Jean Ybarnegaray, later Minister of Youth and Family in the Vichy Government.

Photo, Keystone

de Gaulle, who had recently achieved distinction on the battlefield when in command of an armoured division and who was now appointed Under-Secretary of State for War; M. Baudouin, who became Under-Secretary of the War Cabinet; and M. Prouvost, owner of the powerful newspaper "Paris Soir," who succeeded Mr. Frossard as Minister of Information. M. Reynaud himself, in addition to retaining the portfolios of National Defence and War, became Foreign Minister in place of M. Daladier. Twenty-four hours later the War Cabinet was reduced from eleven to eight members, viz. M. Reynaud, Marshal Pétain, Vice-Premier since 1918, and MM. Chautemps, Marin, Ybarnegaray, Mandel, Monnet and Dautry.

But no changes in the Government could compensate for deficiencies at the front. As day followed day the invaders drew ever nearer to Paris. The last

Cabinet meeting to be held in the capital was on June 9, and by the next day most of the Ministers had left for Tours. That was the day on which Italy entered the war; and before he quitted Paris that night M. Reynaud broadcast to the French people a denunciation of Italy's act.

"It is at just the very moment," he said, "when France, wounded but valiant and undaunted, is fighting against German hegemony for her own independence, as well as for that of the whole world, that Mussolini has chosen to declare war on us. How shall

this act be judged?" he went on. "France has nothing to say. She enters this war with a clear conscience. . . ." It was Mussolini who had decided that "blood must flow."

Even more forthright was President Roosevelt. Flinging aside the least pretence to neutrality, he told the students of the University of Virginia at Charlottesville that "on this 10th day of June the hand that held the dagger has stuck it into the back of its neighbour. On this 10th day of June we send our prayers and our hopes to those countries beyond the seas who are maintaining with magnificent valour their battle for freedom. The United States will send its material resources to the aid of the Allies in their magnificent fight. . . . The signs and signals call for speed—full speed ahead; call for effort, courage, sacrifice, and devotion. Granting the love of freedom, all these are possible."

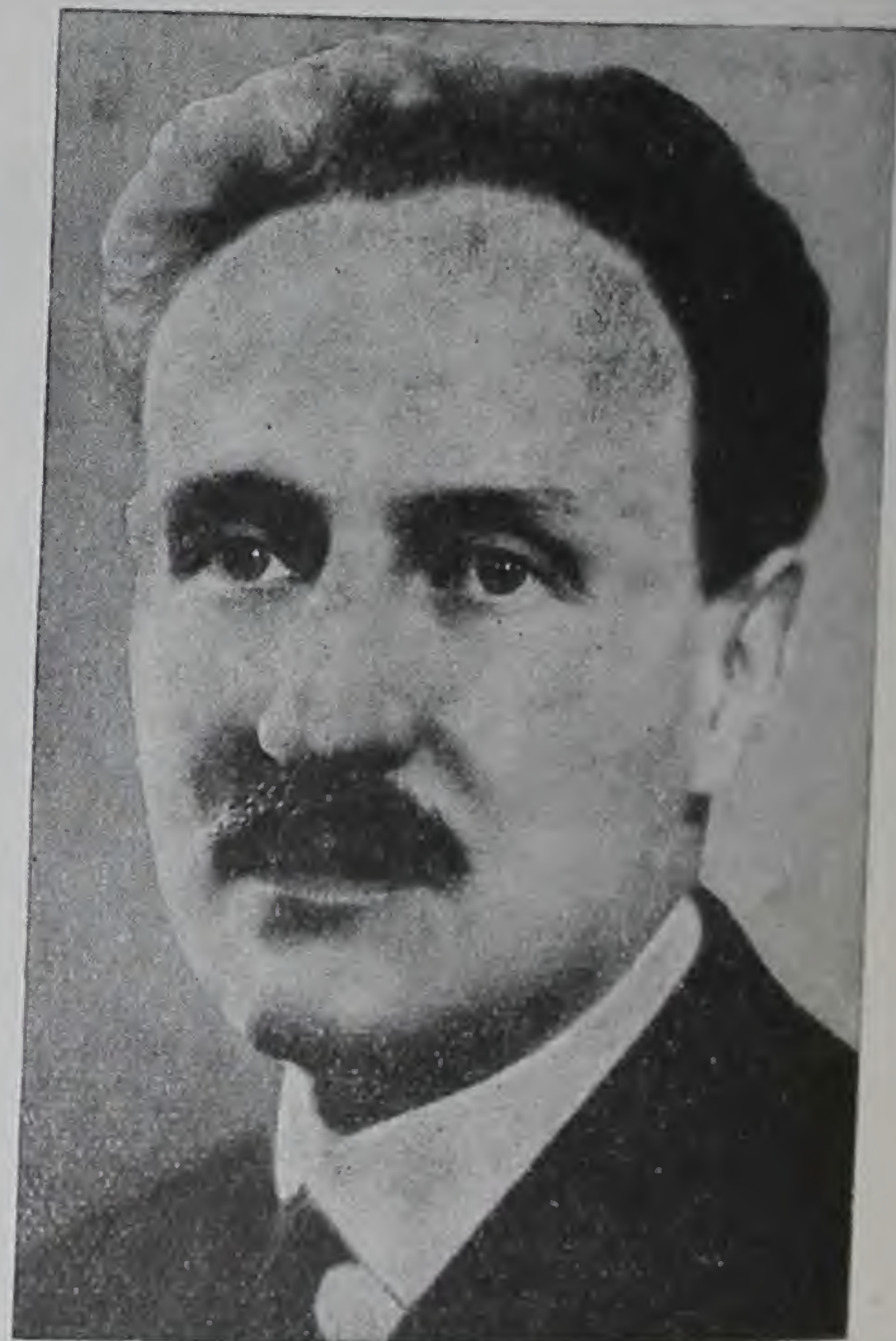
The President spoke before a further personal message from M. Reynaud (see page 982) was received in Washington. In this the Premier, while expressing his gratitude for the generous way in which the President had responded to the appeal he had made on June 5, declared that he now felt obliged to sue for even greater assistance.

"I beg you publicly to declare," he asked, "that the United States will accord the Allies their material supplies in every way short of sending an expeditionary corps. I beg you to do this before it is too late."

He prefaced his appeal by the dramatic statement that "the enemy has today nearly reached the gates of Paris. We shall fight in front of Paris, we shall fight behind Paris. We will shut ourselves into one of our provinces, and if we are driven out we will go to North Africa and, if necessary, into our possessions in America."

Britain was doing all in her power to assist her ally. "All available means," said Mr. Churchill in a message to M. Reynaud, "are being used to give help on land, sea and in the air. The R.A.F. has been continually engaged over the battlefields; and within the last few days fresh British forces have landed in France to take their place with those already engaged in the common struggle, while further extensive reinforcements are being rapidly organized and will shortly be available."

By June 11, the next day, most of the French Ministers had arrived in Tours, and M. Reynaud himself took up his quarters there after spending a night with the troops at the front. The Government established itself in an old château whose feudal arrangements were most obviously unsuited to the purpose to which it was now put, and in the town itself there was the utmost confusion, owing to the arrival of an enormous and ever-increasing number of refugees from Paris. Conditions in Tours were reported to be chaotic, indeed, when Mr. Churchill, Mr. Anthony Eden, and General Sir John Dill, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, arrived there by aeroplane to consult with their French colleagues. The discussions



M. CAMILLE CHAUTEMPS

M. Camille Chautemps, a former Premier, was appointed Vice-Premier in M. Reynaud's Cabinet in March, 1940. He remained in Marshal Pétain's Government after the French armistice, which he favoured.

Photo, Topical

PAINTINGS PROVIDE VIVID COMMENTARY ON BRITAIN AT WAR

A Selection of Striking Works by Well-known Artists produced during the First Three Years



SGT. PARKER

Eric Kennington



CPL. ROBINS, M.M.

Laura Knight, R.A.



SQD. LDR. CROSSLEY

Eric Kennington



BATTLE OF BRITAIN

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Paul Nash



COVENTRY

John Piper



SCENE. Bunks and Sleepers

Henry Moore



TOTES MEER (Dead Sea)



DEVASTATION 1941: CITY. Fallen Lift Shaft

BRITAIN at war has provided a fruitful field for the creative ability of the effort, in the grim drama of her sufferings, in the calm courage of her peace stimulus to his art more urgent, perhaps, than any that the years of peace subjects that have inspired the officially appointed war artists alone may be work in these pages. Here are descriptive records of permanent value

Exhibited at The National Gallery, London, 1940-1942



Paul Nash



Graham Sutherland



DEVASTATION 1941: CITY Twisted Girders Graham Sutherland



A FOUNDRY

Graham Sutherland

y of the artist. In the myriad activities of her vast war
ge of her fighting peoples, the painter has found a vital
peace could evoke. Some idea of the great variety of
may be gathered from the outstanding examples of their
value bearing the deep impress of human experience
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ITALIAN
PRISONERS
OF WAR

Michael Ford

COUNCIL
CHAMBER,
HOUSE OF
COMMONS

John Piper



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extended far into the night, even into the next day. On his return to London Mr. Churchill issued a communiqué, as laconic as non-committal. "Complete agreement was reached," it read, "as to the measures to be taken to meet the developments of the war situation." Another of the British Ministers who visited France at this time was Lord Lloyd, who had been delegated to contact various members of the French Government and of the Colonial Office in particular—no doubt with reference to the fate of the French colonies in the event of the war in France taking a turn for the worse.

After Mr. Churchill's departure the French Cabinet met again at the Château de Congé, and received from General Weygand a gloomy report on the military situation.

Weygand's Now, apparently, it was Pessimism that the question of an armistice was first mooted. Weygand was reported to have argued that not only was the cessation of hostilities highly advisable for military reasons, but that if an armistice were not concluded very shortly the country would be involved in a wave of social disasters. Descending into detail, he (so it was said) revealed that he had just been informed that Maurice Thorez, the Communist leader, was already installed in the Elysée; whereupon M. Mandel, the Minister of the Interior, telephoned M. Langeron, the Prefect of Paris, and learnt that the situation was quite normal and that there had been no signs of any Communist rising. This, at least, is what was rumoured. More certain is it that following the Cabinet meeting it was decided to ask Mr. Churchill to return to Tours with a view to further discussions, aimed in particular at relieving France from her obligation not to make a separate peace—that obligation which had been renewed in the most uncompromising manner as recently as March 28.

Accordingly, on June 13 Mr. Churchill, accompanied this time by Lord Halifax, Foreign Secretary, and Lord Beaverbrook, Minister of Aircraft Production, again arrived in Tours. The French Cabinet began its sitting at 3 p.m., and after a further discussion of the question of applying for an armistice, suggested that Mr. Churchill should meet them in joint session. The British Premier declined the invitation, but had talks with M. Reynaud and M. Mandel, after which he started back again for London. At 5 o'clock M.M. Reynaud and Mandel reported to the Cabinet on their interview with the British Ministers.

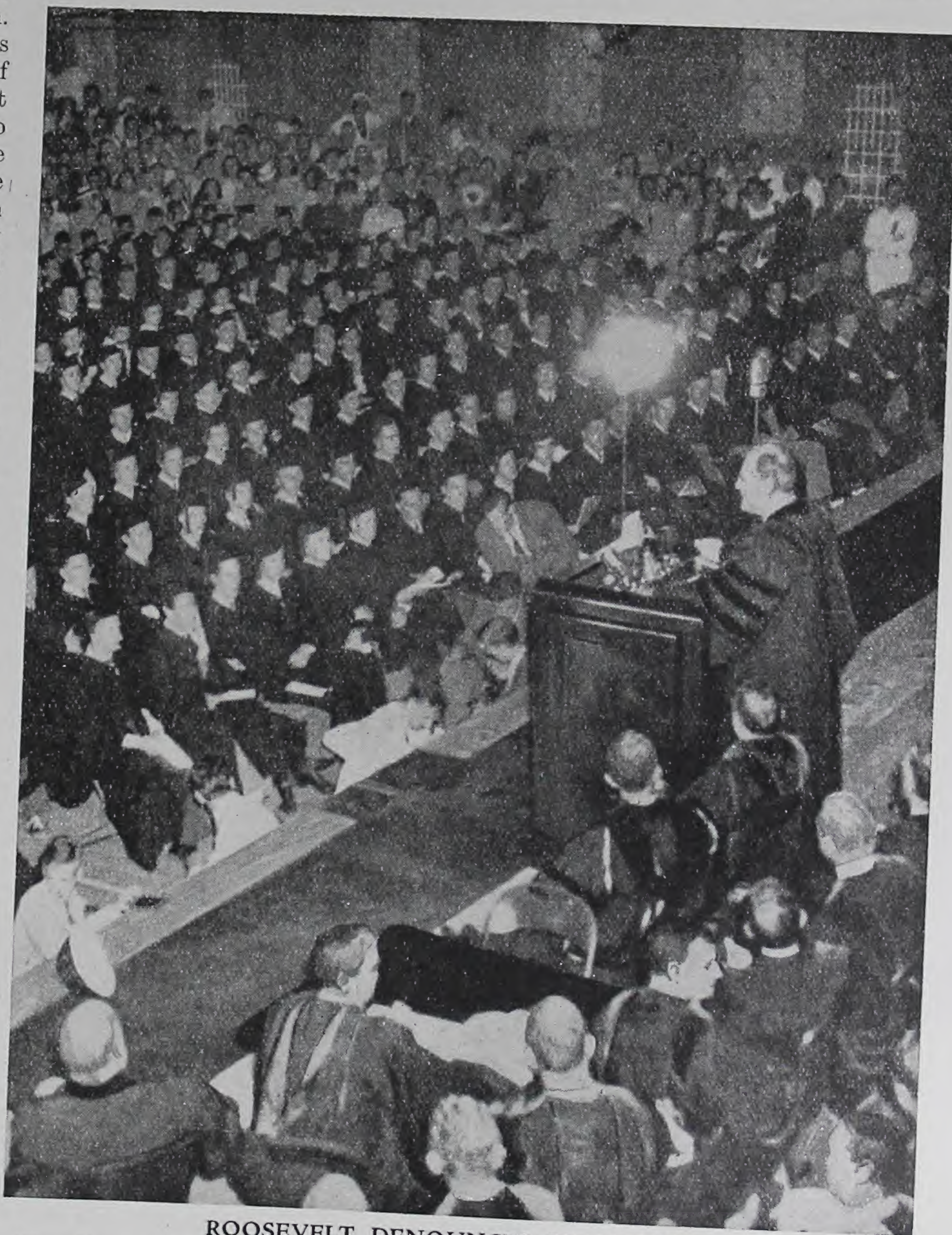
We have two versions of this affair. In his elaborate statement issued to American correspondents at Bordeaux on June 24, M. Prouvost, the French High Commissioner for Propaganda, stated that on June 12 M. Reynaud brought General Weygand to the Council of Ministers.

In the "most dramatic sitting which the French Government has ever known" the Generalissimo explained the military situation. Among the members of the Government the opinion which predominated was that France, with or without an armistice, could not escape total occupation. In this terrible eventuality the Council unanimously decided to ask Mr. Churchill to come to France to consult with it.

"The next day, at 3 p.m., the Council was convened to hear Mr. Churchill. For two hours the French ministers anxiously

waited for the British Prime Minister. At 5 p.m. M. Reynaud and M. Mandel arrived and said that they had seen Mr. Churchill, but that the Prime Minister had had to leave for England. The Council then asked M. Reynaud what would be the opinion of Mr. Churchill should France be obliged to lay down her arms. M. Reynaud replied that in the first place, in agreement with Lord Halifax and Lord Beaverbrook, Mr. Churchill declared that the British Government would continue, as in the past, to give France the maximum military, air and naval aid in their power; but if, however, events should oblige France to ask Germany for an armistice, their opinion was that in no case would England reproach her ally in difficulties, and would understand the situation in which she found herself, very much against her will."

M. Prouvost went on to state that the decision to ask for an armistice



ROOSEVELT DENOUNCES MUSSOLINI

When Mussolini, thinking the struggle as good as over, declared war upon the Allies, his action was stigmatized by President Roosevelt (who referred to it, during the speech he is seen making on June 20, 1940) as "the hand that held the dagger, striking it into the back of its neighbour."

Photo, Planet News

was again postponed for 24 hours, so that they might receive a definite reply from President Roosevelt to France's supreme appeal for aid, and also because they desired to "inform London even more precisely of the situation and the consequences which it would entail." Then he attacked certain French ministers—M. Mandel in particular—who, though they had "received no mandate from the Government, intervened with the British Government, so that the declarations of Mr. Churchill, Lord Halifax and Lord Beaverbrook were not maintained, and Great Britain took a much less understanding and more imperative view of the situation."

Thus M. Prouvost's account; Mr. Churchill's differs in some very important particulars. Speaking on June 25, he declared that some accounts which had been given of his conversations with the Bordeaux Government did not at all correspond with the facts.

"M. Reynaud," he said, "after dwelling on the conditions at the front and the state of the French Army, with which I was well acquainted, asked me whether Great Britain would release France from her obligation not to negotiate for an armistice or peace without the consent of her British ally. Although I knew how great French sufferings were, and that we had not so far endured equal trials or made an equal contribution in the field, I felt bound to say that I could not give consent. I think there would be no use in adding mutual reproaches to the other miseries we might have to bear, but I could not give consent. We agreed that a further appeal should be made by M. Reynaud to the United States, and that if the reply was not sufficient to enable M. Reynaud to go on fighting—and he, after

all, was the fighting spirit—then we should meet again and take a decision in the light of the new factors."

This last point, it may be remarked, is the vitally important one—that before application should be made for an armistice there should be another Anglo-French consultation.

After the British ministers had gone home M. Reynaud dispatched his "new and final appeal" to President Roosevelt.

"Each time that I have asked him to increase his help," he said in a broadcast that evening, "he has done so generously. But it is a question today of the future of France, of the very life of France . . . clouds of aeroplanes must assist us. Forces must come from the other side of the Atlantic and crush the evil forces which dominate Europe . . . we keep hope in our hearts." (See page 982.)

This "final appeal" was sent on the evening of June 13, but such was the confusion prevailing in Tours, it was not telegraphed until the following morning. News of its dispatch, however, had reached Washington, and at a press conference President Roosevelt said that, although the text of the appeal had not yet reached him, he had read it in the papers, and the answer was perfectly simple: "We are doing whatever we possibly can," the emphasis being on "possibly." The actual text of the appeal was not published, but it was believed that it was couched in even more urgent and dramatic terms than the broadcast. In British circles there was some resentment when it was learnt that the French Premier seemed

to have implied that if France withdrew from the war, then Britain alone could not carry on the fight to victory. So far from accepting this defeatist view, it was stated in London that, whatever might be France's decision, Britain would continue the struggle.

Yet another message of encouragement was issued in London. "In this solemn hour," it said, "His Majesty's Government desire to pay to the Government of the French Republic the tribute which is due to the heroic fortitude and constancy of the French Armies in the battle against enormous odds." The pledge to the French Republic to continue the struggle at all costs, in France, in Britain, upon the oceans and in the air, was renewed, and the statement concluded with the proud resolve that "we shall never turn from the conflict until France stands safe and erect in all her grandeur . . ." (See page 982.)



BY FLYING-BOAT TO FRANCE

When it became clear to Britain that France was about to capitulate, Lord Lloyd (right), British Secretary for the Colonies, was flown to France to discuss the position of the French colonies. At the same time the First Sea Lord and the First Lord of the Admiralty flew to Bordeaux to talk over the position of the French fleet. They were piloted by Australian airmen attached to the Coastal Command in Short Sunderland flying-boats of the type shown below.

Photos, L.N.A.: British Official: Crown Copyright





LEADERS OF FREE FRANCE

After France's capitulation many Frenchmen continued the struggle from abroad in conjunction with Britain. Above is General Charles de Gaulle, an expert on mechanized warfare, who first raised the standard of Free France and became acknowledged leader of the army of Free Frenchmen. Right, Vice-Admiral Muselier, in command of the Free French naval forces.

Photos, Howard Coster ; Keystone



One phrase in the statement—"we take this opportunity of proclaiming the indissoluble union of our two peoples and our two empires"—was a presage of the proposal for that dramatic Declaration of Union made three days later.

Paris was entered by the Germans on the morning of June 14, and on the same day the French Government found it imperative to leave Tours for Bordeaux, since, though the army was reported to be retreating in good order, the German columns were thrusting ever deeper into the heart of France.

By now there were rumours in many quarters that the French had decided on capitulation, but there was still some faint hope that the aid promised by America would arrive in time and in sufficient quantity to enable the struggle to be continued. On June 15 Lord Lothian, the British Ambassador in Washington, and the Comte de St. Quentin, his French colleague, conferred with Mr. Roosevelt on the subject of M. Reynaud's appeal for "clouds of

'planes," and they were informed that the President had already dispatched his reply. Soon after their departure from the White House the text of the President's cable was published. "I wish to reiterate," said the President, "that, making every possible effort under present conditions, the Government of the United States has made it possible for the Allied armies to obtain during the past weeks aeroplanes, artillery and munitions of many kinds, and that this Government, so long as the Allies continue to resist, will redouble its efforts in this direction." At the same time, the President made it clear that "these statements carry with them no implications of military commitments. Only Congress can make such commitments." (See page 983.) Any question of a declaration of war by the United States was considered to be quite out of the question.

That Saturday evening the French Cabinet met for three hours at Bordeaux, under the presidency of M. Lebrun. In addition Shadow of to the Ministers there Capitulation were present General Weygand, Admiral Darlan, Commander-in-Chief of the French Navy, and General Vuillemin, Chief of the French Air Force. No report of their decisions was given out, but in well-informed circles there was little doubt that the

French Government was contemplating making a separate peace. With this possibility in view and, if possible, to prevent it, the British Government issued an authoritative statement.

"At a time like the present it is natural that there should be baseless and ill-informed rumours of peace proposals and peace negotiations," it read. "It cannot be too clearly and definitely stated that Great



THE SMILES THAT SOON WORE OFF

Hitler and Mussolini met at Munich on June 18, 1940, to discuss armistice terms for France, and here they are seen smiling at the welcome given them by onlookers. The smiles were conjured up by thoughts of a speedy Axis victory in the war; smiles and thoughts alike soon vanished. Behind the dictators are Ciano and Ribbentrop.

Photo, Associated Press

Britain is firmly and resolutely determined to continue the struggle until victory has been won. Even if France's resistance on land were seriously weakened, she still has the most powerful Navy in Europe after the British Navy, and this great Allied fleet is fully capable of enforcing the blockade, which has become ever more effective as a result of Italy's entry into the war."

"Germany has used up her resources on a reckless scale," the statement went on, "although these reserves may not yet be exhausted. Unless she can defeat the British Empire and its Allies within a few months, her chance of defeating them at all will have vanished."

Stress was laid upon the tremendous resources of the British and French Empires, now supplemented by those coming from the United States; it was stated that in the preceding five weeks more men had been called up for military service in Great Britain than in any corresponding period in her history; the production of aeroplanes, arms and munitions was increasing at a great pace, and the supplies from America would soon be coming as fast as the ports could deal with them.

"Unlike the enemy," the statement concluded, "whose only hope of victory rests in defeating the Allies within a few weeks or months, we are prepared to continue the war just so long as it may be necessary

to secure the downfall of our opponents, even though it may take years to accomplish that task. In their unshaken determination to achieve victory, no matter what the cost, the Government of the Empire have the united support of their people."

That Sunday, June 16, was France's day of vital decision. Three times the French Cabinet met, and throughout the day M. Reynaud was in communication with the British Government, sometimes through the Ambassador, Sir Ronald Campbell, sometimes over the telephone with General de Gaulle, who was in London on a military mission. In a message to Mr. Churchill, M. Reynaud revealed that the American response to his appeal was not considered satisfactory, and asked, therefore, for France's formal release from the obligation imposed by the Anglo-French Agreement. The British Cabinet was immediately convened, and a reply was sent whose general substance was communicated by Mr. Churchill to the House of Commons on June 25.

"Separate negotiations whether for armistice or peace," said the Premier, "depend upon an agreement made with the French Republic and not on any particular French administration or statesman. That, therefore, involved the honour of France.

However—and this was in view of what one saw of all they had suffered and of what were the forces evidently working upon them—provided that the French Fleet was dispatched to British ports and remained there while the negotiations were conducted, his Majesty's Government would give their consent to the French Government asking what terms of armistice would be open to them.

It was also made clear that his Majesty's Government were resolved to continue the war and altogether cut themselves out of any association with such inquiries about an armistice.

At M. Reynaud's invitation Mr. Churchill got ready to repair immediately to Bordeaux. In the meantime the finishing touches were applied to 'Declaration a dramatic proposal of Union' which it was hoped would fortify France's spirit and induce her to continue the struggle at Britain's side. News of this proposal was telephoned by General de Gaulle from London to his chief in Bordeaux, and the General urged that no decisive steps should be taken until its terms had been ascertained.

The British proposals were communicated to the French Government in Bordeaux by Sir Ronald Campbell on June 16, and published in London on the following day. They took the form of a "Declaration of Union" which it was proposed the two Governments should immediately conclude. The Declaration (whose draft is given

in page 983) was one of "indissoluble union and unyielding resolution" in "common defence of justice and freedom, against subjection to a system which reduced mankind to a life of robots and slaves." No longer would France and Great Britain be two nations, but they would constitute one Franco-British Union with joint organs of defence, foreign, financial and economic policies. Every citizen of the one country would immediately enjoy full citizenship of the other; there would be a single War Cabinet, and all the forces of Britain and France would be placed under its direction. It would govern from wherever it best could,

disastrously defeated, rather than that in the hope, nay certainty, of eventual victory, she should merge her identity with her ally. Some have argued that if the offer had been made a little earlier it would have stood a better chance of acceptance. But it was turned down. According to one version, it was rejected by 14 to 10, although another account has it that no formal vote was taken upon it when the Cabinet reassembled for the third time at 10 p.m. Certain it is that the Ministers, who had just received a further report on the military situation from General Weygand, were asked to vote yes or no to the definite proposal that

negotiations for an armistice should be opened up with the enemy, and the voting was 13 in favour and 11 against (another report says 14 to 10). Amongst those in favour of an armistice were Marshal Pétain and MM. Baudouin, Prouvost, Chautemps, Ybarne-garay and Frossard, Bouthillier and Chichery, with the sinister figure of ex-Premier Laval active in the background, while those in favour of a continuation of the struggle included MM. Reynaud, Mandel, Campinchi, Delbos, Monnet, Dautry, Marin, and Laurent-Eynac. M. Reynaud immediately resigned



DRAPED WITH THE SWASTIKA

Nazi guards stand before the monument at Compiègne erected after the war of 1914-18 in memory of the soldiers of France. It infuriated the Nazis because it showed the German eagle transfixed by a French sword.

Photo, E.N.A.

and President Lebrun forthwith invited Marshal Pétain to form a government. After a short consultation with the President the Marshal produced his list of Ministers, obviously prepared in advance; his Vice-Premier was

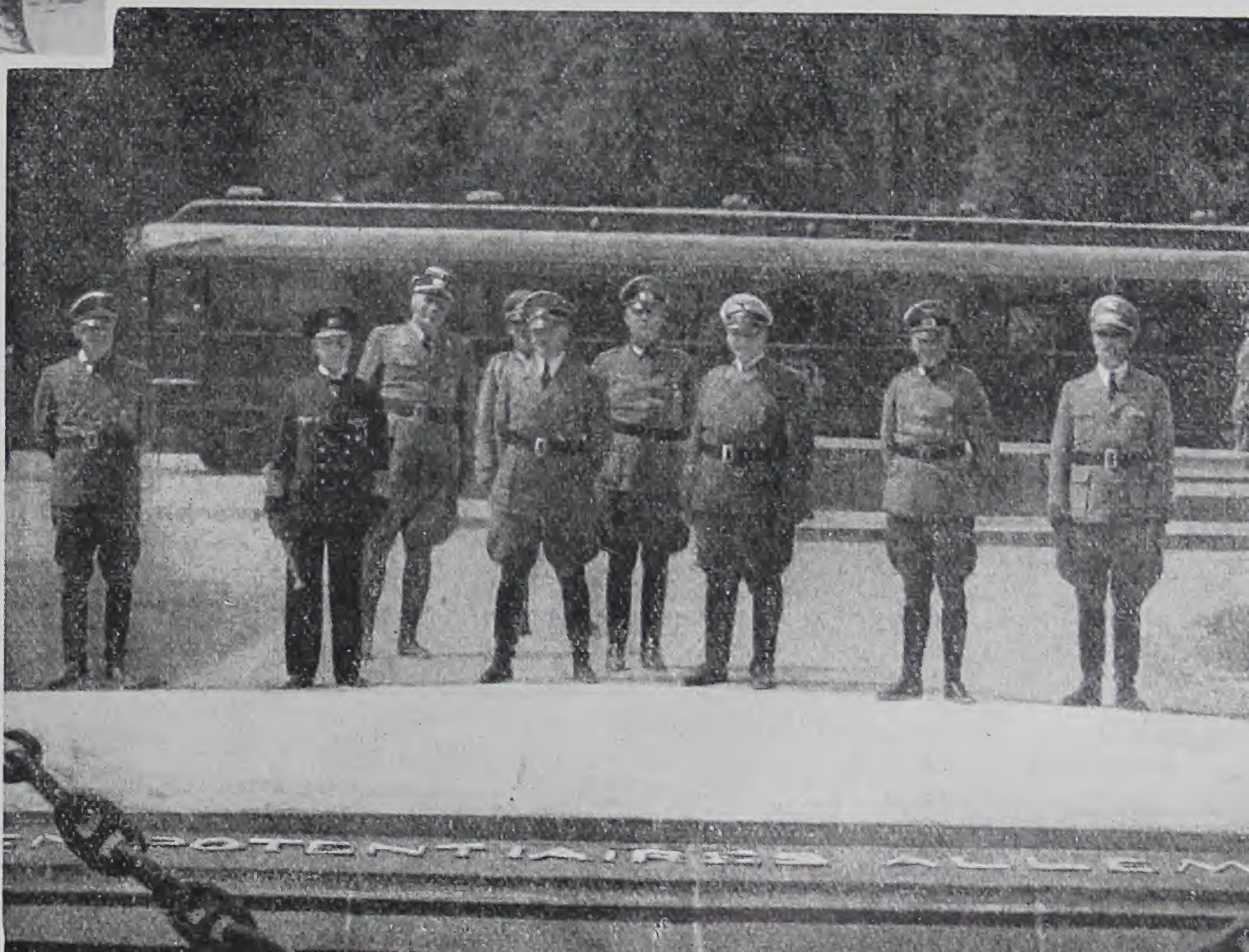
TIME'S WHIRLIGIG

Hitler and his staff await the arrival of the French delegates on June 21, 1940, before Marshal Foch's famous coach in which the 1918 armistice was signed. Left to right: Ribbentrop, Admiral Raeder, Brückner, Hitler, General Keitel, Goering, General von Brauchitsch, and Hess. On the right is Hitler's personal standard. Above (left), Dr. Bell and Dr. Müller, the German signatories to the Treaty of Versailles, so often denounced by Hitler, seen at Cologne station on their way to Paris.

Photos, E.N.A.; Central Press

and the two Parliaments would be formally associated. "The Union will concentrate its whole energy against the power of the enemy, no matter where the battle may be. And thus we shall conquer."

The terms of this offer were conveyed to the French Cabinet by M. Reynaud, who, if report speaks true, had been informed by the British Government that he might be appointed the first Prime Minister of the Franco-British Union. Its reception was mixed. Those who were in favour of carrying on the war, if necessary from outside France in the French Empire, welcomed it; others regarded the offer as in some way offensive to French national pride. Apparently they held the view that it was preferable for France to maintain her nominal independence even though she were





ROLES REVERSED

Above, Marshal Foch, with French and British delegates, is seen outside the railway coach at Compiègne where the Allied armistice with Germany was signed on November 11, 1918. Below, Hitler and his leaders are seen awaiting the arrival of the French delegates at the same spot on June 21, 1940, when it was France's turn to sue for peace.

Photos, Wide World ; E.N.A.

M. Chautemps ; M. Baudouin, Foreign Minister ; General Colson, Minister of War ; Admiral Darlan, Minister of the Navy and Merchant Marine ; General Pujo, Minister of Air ; and M. Ybarnegaray, the Basque leader, Minister of War Veterans and Families. At 10.30 M. Reynaud left the Cabinet room ; at 11.30 it was announced over the wireless that he had resigned and Marshal Pétain was Premier in his stead ; before midnight the aged Marshal



had sent for the Spanish Ambassador, Señor Lequerica, and requested him to convey to Hitler the French Government's desire for an armistice.

When the news of M. Reynaud's fall was telephoned to London by Sir Ronald Campbell, Mr. Churchill was actually in the train, just about to set off for Bordeaux. He returned to Downing Street and arranged for the dispatch to the new French Government of a reminder that the condition on which the British Government had insisted in return for France's release from her promise had not been complied with—that the French Fleet should be sent to a British port. "There was plenty of time to do it," said Mr. Churchill on June 25 ; "it would have made no difference to the negotiations, and the terms could hardly have been more severe than they were. In order to reinforce the earnestness with which we held our views, we sent the First Sea Lord (Sir Dudley Pound) and the First Lord (Mr. Alexander), as well as Lord Lloyd, to establish what contacts were possible with the new Ministers."

On the morrow (Monday, June 17) Marshal Pétain told France over the wireless that "with a heavy heart I say we must cease to fight" ; he had appealed to the enemy to ask whether he was ready to discuss with him "as between soldiers and in honour" the means of bringing hostilities to an end. On the same day M. Baudouin made his début as Foreign Minister in a broadcast from Bordeaux, in which he declared that, though France was ready to lay down her arms if an honourable peace could be obtained, she would refuse to accept shameful conditions which would mean the end of her people's spiritual freedom. "The enemy has not broken

our morale," he claimed; "he has achieved his end only by the crushing superiority of his effectives and material. Our troops faced the battle with their traditional valour. They could not replace the tanks, cannon and the planes destroyed by the enemy. The 40 million Frenchmen found themselves before the Battle of France almost alone against the 80 million Germans, reinforced by the menace of the Italian Army." That was why the French Government had been obliged to ask the enemy what his conditions would be for an armistice, although France had not, as yet, actually laid down her arms. Mr. Churchill, too, broadcast that evening: "The news from France is very bad and I grieve for the gallant French people," he said. "Nevertheless, we are sure that in the end all will be well." (See page 983.)

Meanwhile, the negotiations for an armistice were proceeding. Pétain's application had reached the Fuehrer, and at noon on June 18, the anniversary

of the Battle of Waterloo, Hitler arrived in Munich, and three hours later Mussolini joined him there. From 4 p.m. until shortly after 8 the two Dictators were in conference at the Fuehrer House, and at the conclusion of their meeting it was baldly stated that they had agreed on their attitude towards the French request for an armistice. Then Mussolini went back to Rome and Hitler returned to his G.H.Q. And still the war went on; still all the French land, sea and air forces were instructed to continue their resistance until the terms of an honourable armistice could be announced.

Towards nightfall it was reported from Madrid that the decisions taken at Munich had been notified to the German Embassy there and were being passed on through Señor Lequerica and the Spanish Foreign Office to the French Government in Bordeaux. The terms were not published as yet, but no one doubted that they would be harsh. Meanwhile, in London Mr. Churchill, in the name of Britain, defied the Dictators; while General de Gaulle broadcast an impassioned appeal to his fellow-countrymen. "Has the last word been said?" he asked; "has all hope disappeared? Is the defeat final? No. Believe me, I speak with knowledge, and I tell you that France is not lost." Then he invited all French officers and men, French engineers and skilled workmen of the armament industries, who were on British soil or who might arrive there, to get in touch with him. "Whatever happens, the flame of



GERMAN SIGNATORY

General Keitel, Chief of Staff of the German Army, is here seen signing the Franco-German armistice terms at Compiègne on behalf of his country.

Photo, E.N.A.

French resistance must not and shall not be extinguished!"

The German reply, reported to the French Cabinet on June 19, required the nomination of French plenipotentiaries to meet the representatives of the German Government at a place and time to be notified later. Still the terms of the armistice were not revealed, but there were many in Bordeaux who felt that they would



FRENCH SIGNATORY

General Huntziger, head of the French armistice delegation, signing the Franco-German armistice terms at Compiègne on June 22, 1940.

Photo, E.N.A.

be so humiliating that it would be impossible for a self-respecting France to accept them. Hence they renewed their plea that the Government should leave France for North Africa; a number of deputies, indeed, including MM. Daladier, Mandel, Delbos and Campinchi, actually went on board the "Massilia" in the Gironde, and two days later—with the connivance and, apparently, the active assistance of the French authorities—sailed for Africa, arriving at Casablanca about June 24. For this they were later arraigned as "deserters" and threatened with trial by the Vichy Government; when, on June 25, General Lord Gort and Mr. Duff Cooper endeavoured to contact them in Morocco, they were prevented from doing so. The arguments of the "die-hards" were supported in person by Mr. A. V. Alexander, Sir Dudley Pound, and Lord Lloyd, who renewed their offers of British warships and other vessels to help transport French troops and officials to Africa, and pressed that the French Fleet should be removed at once to British ports.

The rot had gone too deep and too far, however. On the evening of June 19 the names of the French plenipotentiaries—General Huntziger, Rear-Admiral Maurice Leluc, General of the Air Force Bergeret and M. Noel, formerly Ambassador to Poland—were transmitted to Berlin via Madrid, and within a few hours Hitler's instructions were received concerning the place and time of the armistice meeting. The unhappy four left Bordeaux on the morning of June 20, and while they were on their way to Paris via Tours Marshal Pétain made another apologia over the wireless. He uttered the astonishing assertion that on the eve of the Battle of France the French Army was only 2,800,000 strong, and that in war material France was even more deficient than in effectives. Nevertheless, she would learn a lesson from the battle which had just been lost. "Stand by me," he concluded, "the fight still goes on. It is for France, the soil of her sons." (See page 990.) And still the German armies continued their advance, pouring into the central zone of France from west and north and east.

Now the stage was set for the drama of the armistice. The scene was that same glade in the Forest of Compiègne where not quite 22 years before Marshal Foch had dictated the terms of surrender to a defeated and completely crushed Germany. The same railway coach was used, and the plenipotentiaries sat at the same table and on the same chairs



hour later the French delegation made their appearance. Silently saluting Hitler's flag, they, too, entered the dining car. Hitler and his party rose on their entrance and gave the Nazi salute. Then all took their seats at the table, Hitler and Huntziger face to face, with their colleagues on either hand. The proceedings were opened by Keitel, who read the preamble to the armistice conditions.

"At the order of the Leader and Supreme Commander of the German Defence Forces," he began, "I have to make the following communication:

Trusting to the assurance given to the German Reich by the American President Wilson and confirmed by the Allied Powers, the German Defence Forces in November 1918 laid down their arms. Thus ended a war which the German people and its Government did not want, and in which in spite of vastly superior forces the enemy did not succeed in defeating the German Army, the German Navy or the German Air Force.

If the historic Forest of Compiègne has been chosen for the handing over of these terms, this is done in order, by this act of atoning justice, to wipe out once and for all a memory which for France was not a glorious one in her history and which was felt by the German nation as the deepest shame of all times.

After a heroic resistance France has been defeated in a single bloody battle and has collapsed. Germany does not, therefore, intend to give the armistice negotiations with such a brave opponent a shameful character.

The purpose of the German demand is: (1) to prevent a resumption of the fight, and (2) to give Germany all safeguards for the continuation of the war against Great Britain which has been forced upon her, as well as to create the preliminaries for the construction of a new peace, the essential contents of which will be the restoration of the wrong done with violence to the German nation."

The reading concluded, everyone stood, and at 3.42 p.m. the Fuehrer and



FRANCE ACCEPTS ITALY'S TERMS

After the armistice had been signed with Germany the French delegates left for Rome to conclude similar negotiations with Italy. Top left, the French delegation entering the Villa Incisa, near Rome, where the meeting was held. Above, Marshal Badoglio (standing) reading the Italian armistice terms. Facing the camera, left to right, M. Léon Noël, General Huntziger, General Parisot, General Bergeret. Right, new Franco-Italian frontier at Mentone denoted by a rope across the road. Beyond, looking in the direction of Nice, is still unoccupied France.

Photos, Associated Press; E.N.A.

which had been in use at the historic meeting of November 11, 1918.

On the afternoon of June 21 a guard of honour composed of German troops was drawn up outside the coach, and immediately in front of the Armistice Memorial the personal standard of the Fuehrer was raised. Soon after 3 o'clock Hitler arrived and was greeted by Field-Marshal Goering, Col.-Gen. Keitel, Chief of Staff of the Army; Col.-Gen. von Brauchitsch, C.-in-C. of the Army; Grand Admiral Raeder; Herr von Ribbentrop and Rudolf Hess, Foreign Minister and Deputy Fuehrer respectively. The Germans entered the coach and a quarter of an

At the moment of the arrival of the German Armistice Commission there began the breach of the promise solemnly given. On November 11, 1918, there began in this very train a period of suffering for the German people.

Whatever could be done to a nation in the way of dishonour and humiliation in human and material suffering, began at this point. Broken promises and perjury were used against a nation which after over four years of heroic resistance had shown only one weakness—namely, that of believing the promises of democratic statesmen.

On September 3, 1939, twenty-five years after the outbreak of the World War, Great Britain and France declared war on Germany without any reason. Now the war has been decided by arms. France is defeated. The French Government has asked the German Government to make known the German conditions for an armistice.





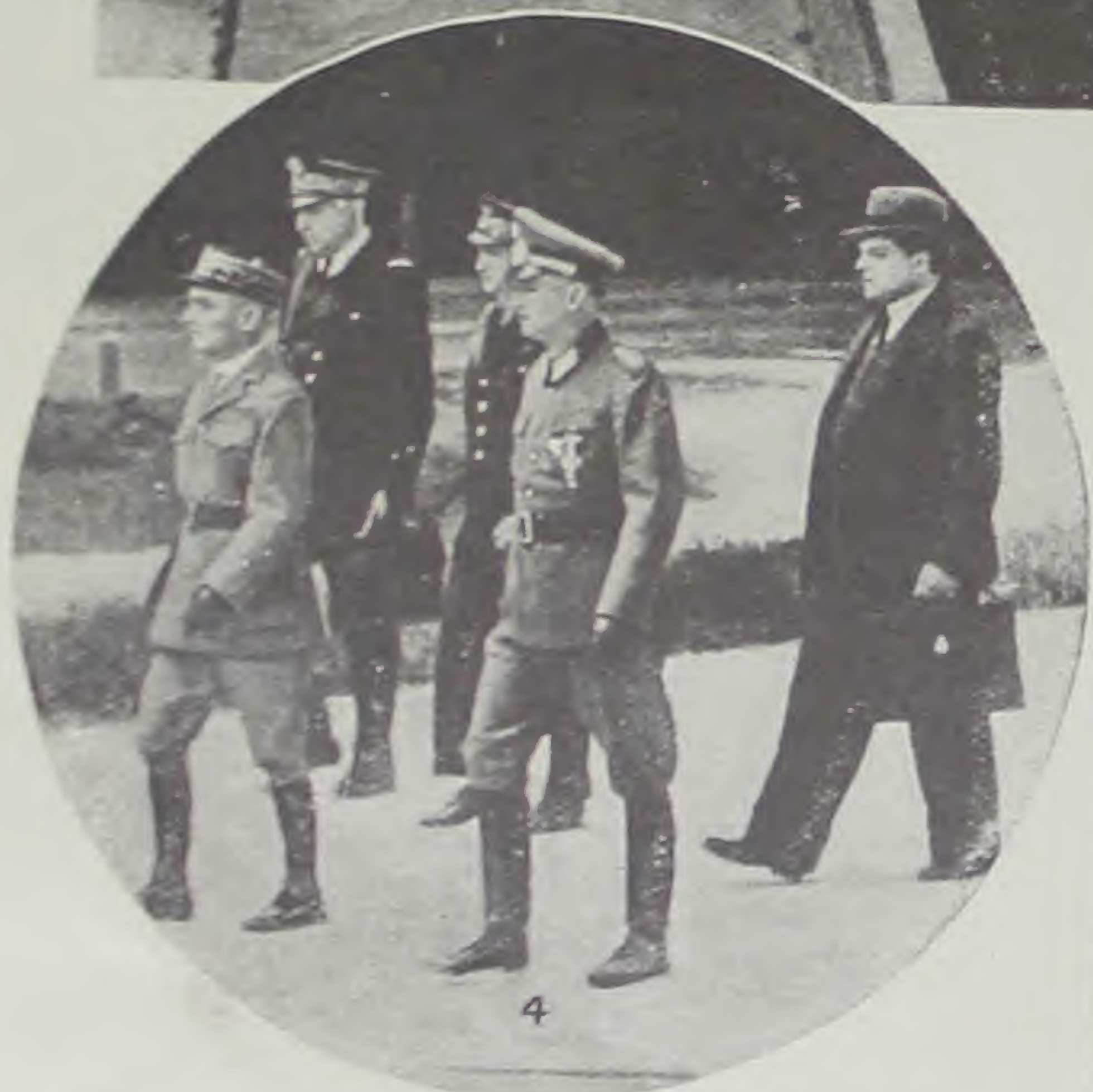
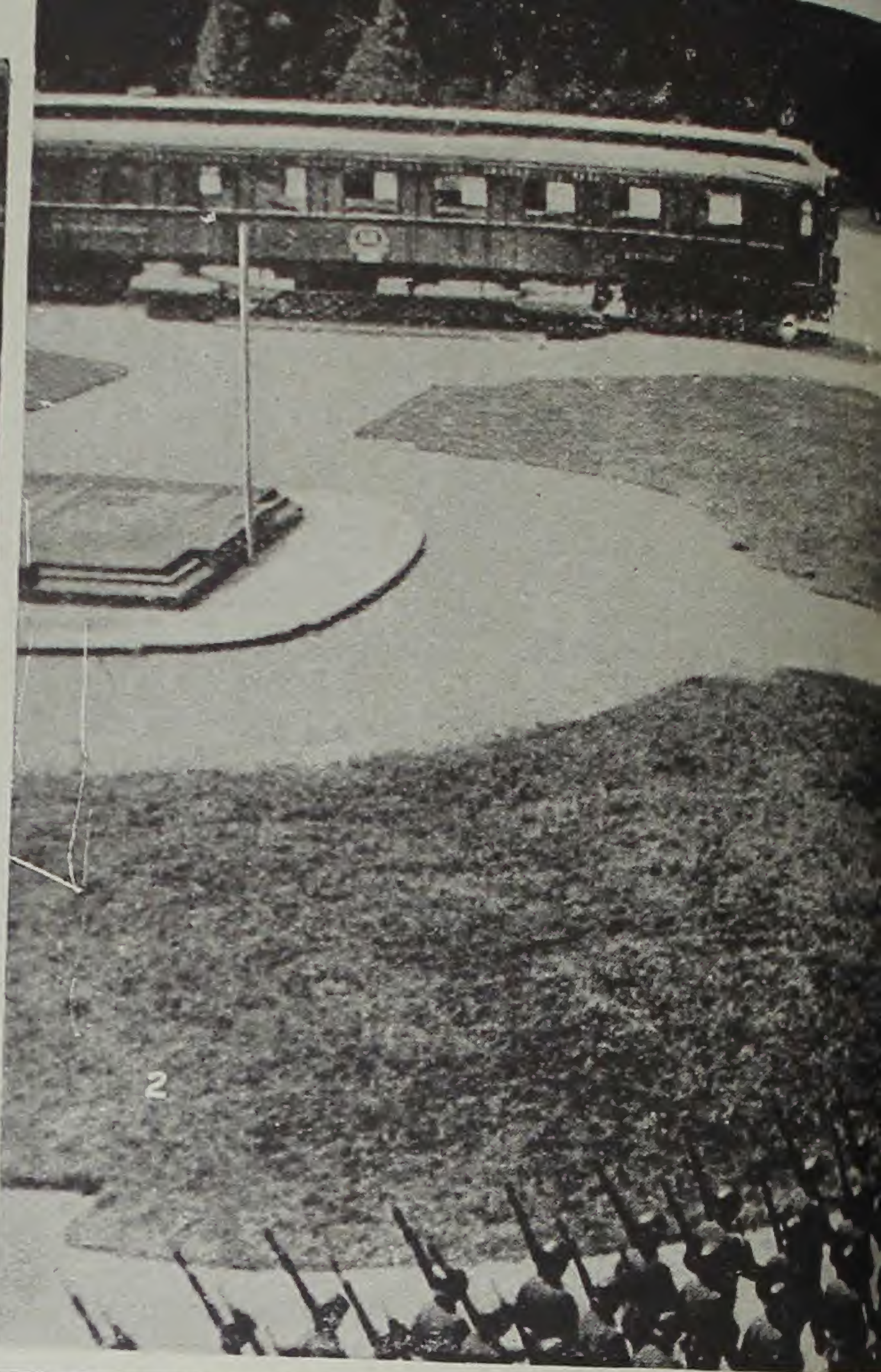
GUNS AND MEN GO HOME

As much material as possible was evacuated from Cherbourg before the Germans reached the town on June 18, 1940. Above, Bren guns and equipment are piled on the deck of a transport bound for England, while below weary soldiers are seen fast asleep on another part of the deck as the ship makes its way to a home port.

Photos, Ministry of Information

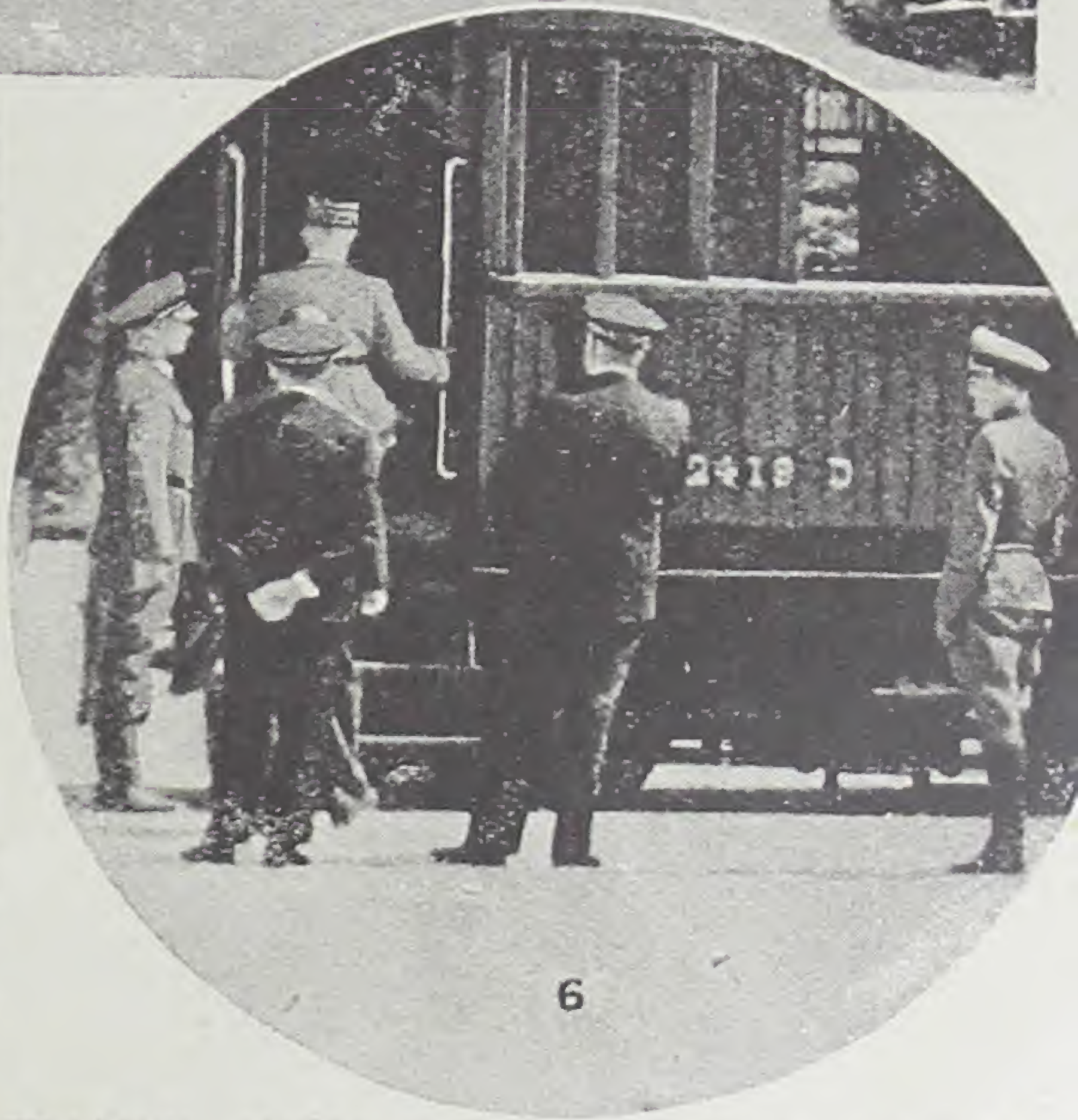
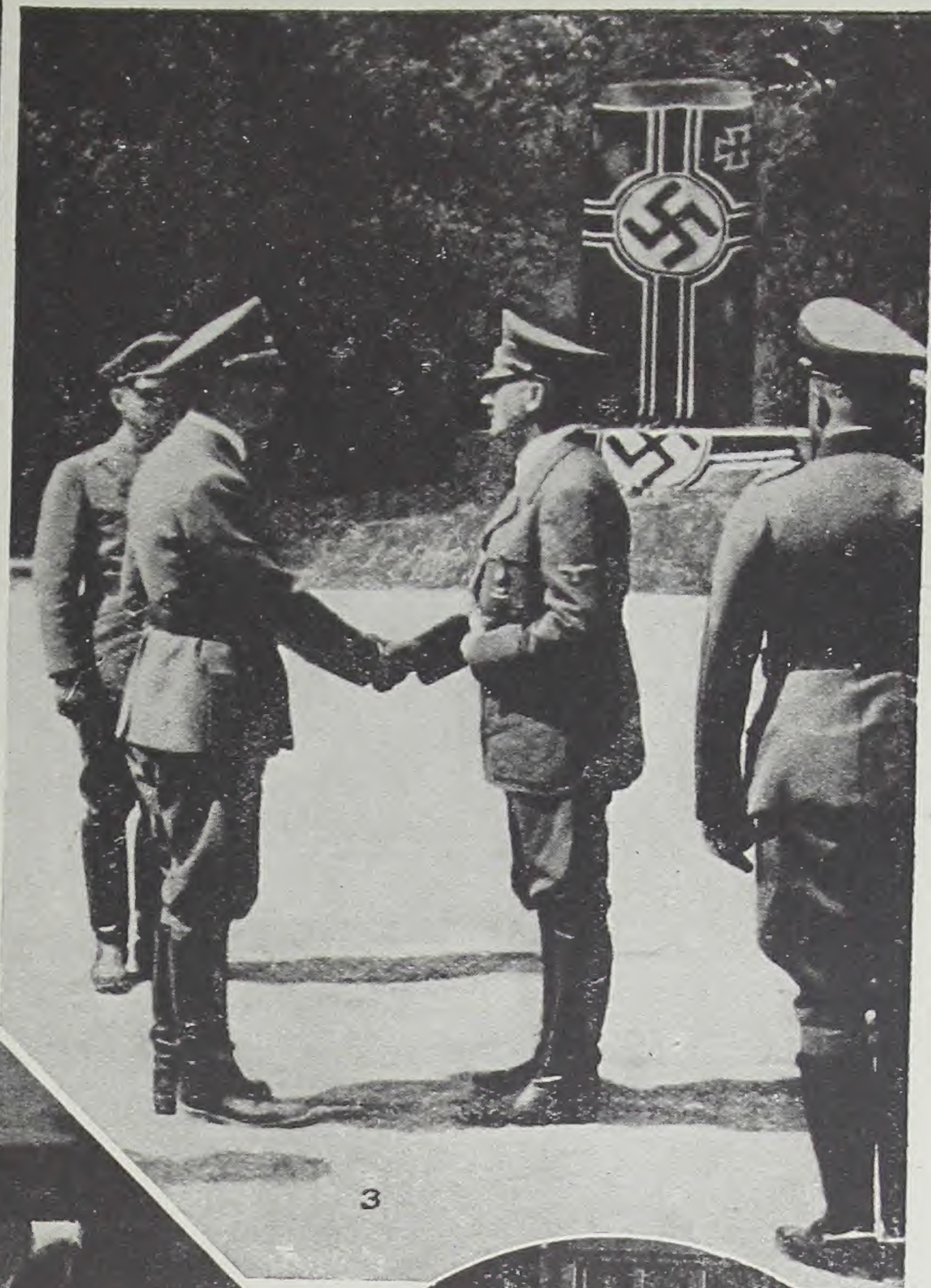
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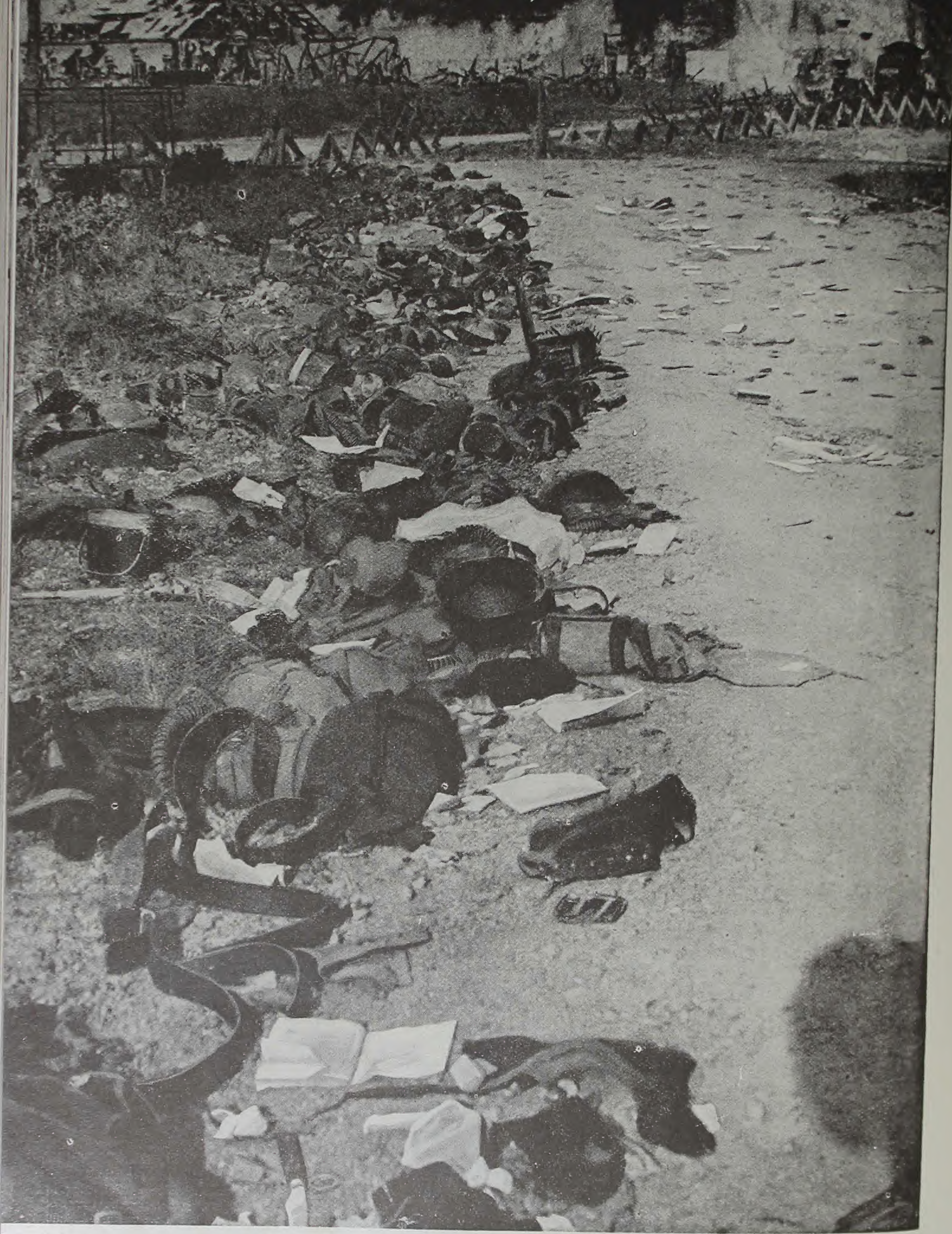


SCENE OF FRENCH TRIUMPH AND SHAME

The photographs in this page show the theatrical presentation of armistice terms to France in the same railway carriage in which the armistice of 1918 was signed. 1, the carriage being placed by German soldiers in the position it occupied near Compi gne in November, 1918. 2, a German guard of honour. 3, Hitler arrives. In the background the monument to the soldiers of France who fell in 1914-18 is seen draped with the swastika. 4, the French delegates arrive; in front, General Huntziger,



FRANCE SUBMITS TO GERMAN MIGHT
 behind are Vice-Admiral Le Luc (with portfolio) and General Bergeret, of the French Air Force. Following, in civilian clothes, M. Léon Noël. 5, reading the terms of the Armistice on June 21, 1940, inside the coach. Around the table from left to right are Admiral Raeder, Goering, Hitler, General Keitel (reading the terms), General von Brauchitsch, Rudolf Hess, General Huntziger and Vice-Admiral Le Luc. Ribbentrop has his back to the camera. 6, the French delegates entering the railway carriage.



LITTER OF A VANQUISHED ARMY

This photograph, taken shortly after the Nazi occupation of Northern France, shows gas-masks, steel helmets, leggings, water-bottles, haversacks and countless other equipment thrown away along the roadside by the retreating French armies. Hundreds of miles of road were left in a similar condition.

Photo, E.N.A.



ARMISTICE COMMISSION AT WORK

This historic photograph shows the Franco-German Armistice Commission in session in the Council Chamber at the Hotel Nassauer Hof, Wiesbaden. The Commission sat to work out details in connexion with German occupation of France under the armistice terms. The French delegates were headed by General Huntziger; the Germans by General Stülpnagel.

Photo, E.N.A.

his suite left the car to the strains of "Deutschland über Alles" and the Horst Wessel song. Then the French delegation retired to a tent placed near by for their accommodation and noted the terms of surrender. Their tenor was such that they had to telephone to Bordeaux, but at 6 o'clock they returned to the coach for a discussion with Keitel. The conversation continued into the next day, and again

there were consultations with Bordeaux, where the French Cabinet was in almost permanent session. But by now Keitel was getting impatient and at 6.30 p.m. he asked for a final answer within an hour. So at 6.50 (5.50 p.m. B.S.T.) on Saturday, June 22, the armistice was signed, by General Huntziger for France and General Keitel for Germany. (The terms are set out in page 1018.

Just before appending his signature Huntziger said:

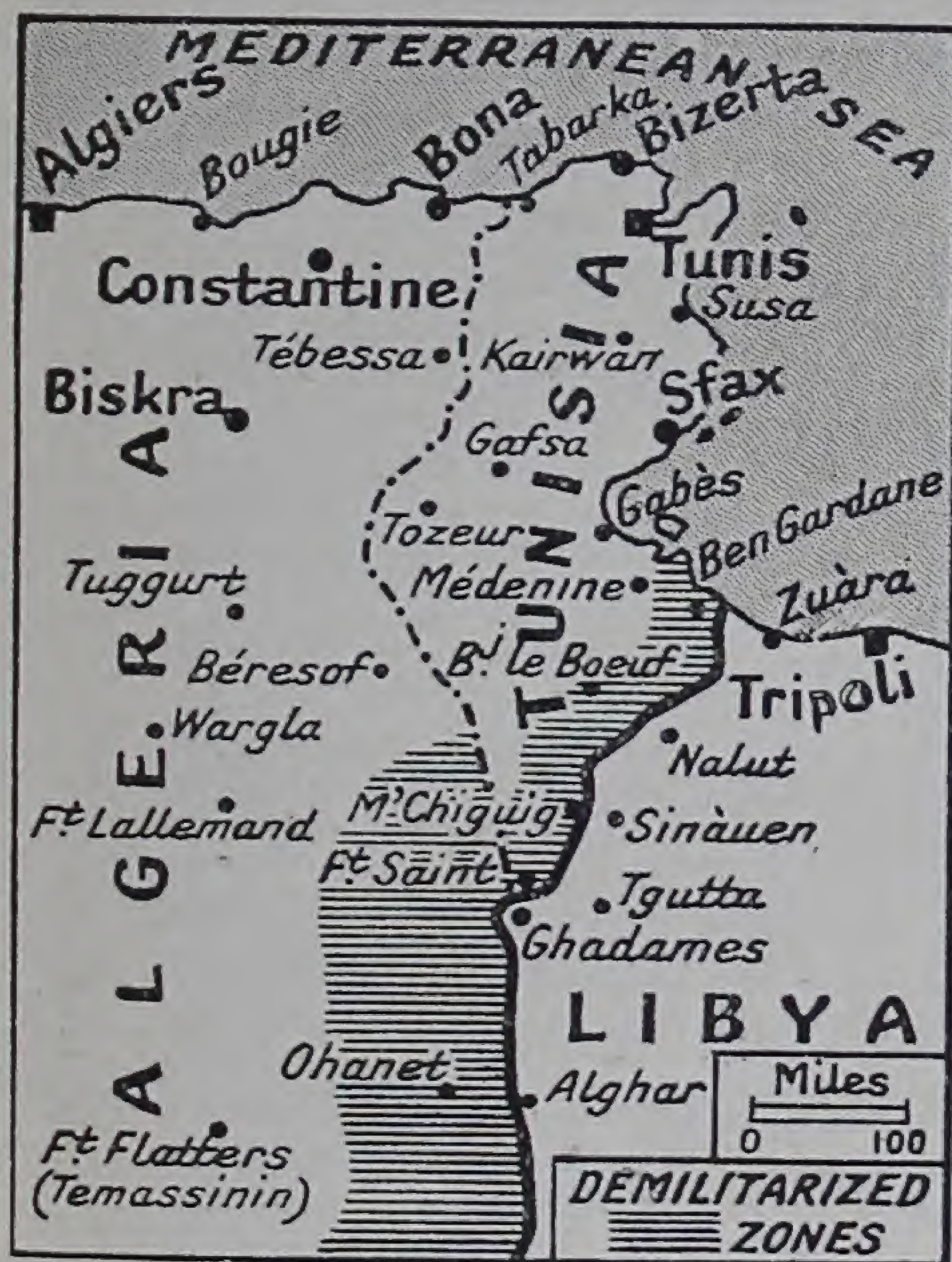
"The French Government has agreed to the terms of the armistice, but before signing the document I wish to say a few personal words. At the moment when the French delegation puts its signatures to this document, being forced to agree to conditions through military misfortune, and having fought on the side of its ally, the delegation wishes to point out that France has the right to expect from Germany a peace which would secure good neighbourly relations with her great neighbour. As one soldier speaking to another, I hope that French soldiers will never have to regret that they laid down their arms for the peace to come."

To which Keitel briefly replied:

"I confirm the acceptance of the French Government in signing this armistice agreement. As a soldier I have little to say except that the victor knows how to honour a courageous, defeated foe." After the signatures had been actually appended, the German asked all the delegates to rise. "At this moment," he said, "it is our duty to remember those brave soldiers of our

countries who have spilled their blood on the battlefields. We have risen to honour their memory."

But though the armistice was signed hostilities did not cease. The humiliation and torture of ravaged France were to be carried yet further. An announcement from Hitler's headquarters made it clear that arms would not be laid down until **Fighting Continues** Italian Government had informed the German High Commission that an Italian-French armistice had been concluded. So without wasting a moment the French delegates proceeded by car and 'plane to Rome, where they arrived on the afternoon of June 23. They drove forthwith to the Villa Manzoni, some miles outside the city, and there the five Frenchmen—for they had now been joined by General Parisot, former French Military Attaché in Rome—opened discussions with the Italian officials. A little later they motored to the Villa Incisa, some miles farther from the capital, where the negotiations proper were conducted with the Italian plenipotentiaries, these being Count Ciano, Foreign Minister; Marshal Badoglio, Chief of the General Staff; Admiral Cavagnari, Chief of Naval Staff; General Pricolo, Chief of the Air Staff; and



DEMILITARIZED

The shaded portion in the map above shows the French zones in Algeria and Tunisia which were demilitarized under the terms of the Franco-Italian armistice signed on June 24, 1940.